

“isn’t all violence bad, though?”

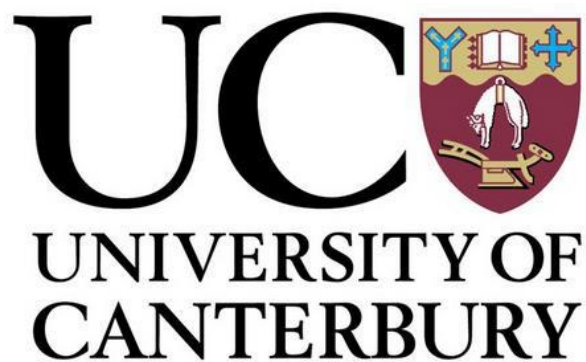
An Investigation into the Role of Violence in Nonviolent Resistance

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Abstract

This thesis examines the role that violence plays in the practice and theory of nonviolent resistance. The project investigates not only the occurrence of violence in movements and movement dynamics, but also the role of different definitions of violence, and disagreements about this. In this way, the thesis removes the concept of nonviolent resistance from an assumed violence-free sphere, not as an attempt to argue that the differentiation between violent and nonviolent resistance is hypocritical or meaningless, but rather, to take seriously the grey areas and blurry definitional lines between them. This is first introduced in the beginning of the project as an attempt to move away from purist conceptions of nonviolent resistance. The thesis starts with a review of the current nonviolence literature, focusing on these definitional questions, but also on how and why nonviolence works. It examines the history of nonviolence, in particular a certain popular narrative of this history, and discusses the concept of violence in more depth than what is usually found in nonviolence literature. This discussion is crucial to the overall project, because it allows for more nuanced and varied understandings of violence to be incorporated into the discussion of what it is nonviolence does *not* do (or tries to not do). For example, the arguments that private violence is political, that violence can be systemic and structural, and that non-material harm may count as violence, are used in the thesis to broaden the scope of what nonviolence might mean. Following from this, the project looks at three different concrete ways in which violence, and definitions of violence, impact nonviolent resistance: violence that opponents use towards nonviolent movements; violence that can happen within nonviolent movements; and violence in and around collective identity formation processes in nonviolent movements. These three are by no means the only ways in which the project highlights that violence impacts nonviolent resistance, but a starting point for these discussions. The thesis asks whether it is possible to conceive of nonviolence not as a check-list of actions or techniques, but an aspiration of being against violence in all forms and venues. This is not, of course, a call to do all of that all the time, but rather to treat the definition of nonviolent resistance as a dynamic and open process in which it is not pre-determined which forms of violence matter, and which do not.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis explores the role that violence plays in nonviolent resistance theory and movements; or rather, it explores some of the many different roles that violence plays. Although this premise can seem contradictory on an intuitive level – it is, after all, called *nonviolent* resistance – I argue that definitions of violence, and the actual occurrence of forms of violence, are in fact core parts of the understanding and practice of nonviolent resistance, despite the fact that the concept of violence has been largely overlooked or pushed to the margins within the literature. The title, “isn’t all violence bad, though?” has two meanings depending on where emphasis is placed, both of which speak to this topic. I heard the phrase during a talk with feminist author Clementine Ford in 2017, in which she used it sarcastically to suggest that actually no, not all violence is (at least equally) bad (Ford, 2017). Ford explained that “isn’t all violence bad” is an often-used response, mostly by men, as a counter to her sympathising with women who react, or want to react, to sexual harassment and violence with slapping or kicking the harasser. Essentially, in this context, “isn’t all violence bad, though?” expresses an equalising of the single instance of direct violence against a harasser on the one side, and the structural and systemic violence of sexism and patriarchy on the other.

This co-optation of nonviolence is not uncommon, and is found also in statements which equally condemn “peaceful” protests “turning violent” and the often much greater violence and repression which the protests are responding to in the first place (e.g. Duchess of Sussex, 2020; Butler, 2020, 2-3, also discusses a very similar co-optation of nonviolence), and shares with them an ignoring of differences in harm caused, as well as inequalities in available options for acting without violence for different actors. Such framings tend to favour the status quo and “peacefulness” over resisting or fighting oppression and violence, if this resistance comes with any occurrence of obvious, direct violence. This is one of the themes of this project and is particularly visible through the critiques of purist narratives of nonviolent resistance that the project puts forward. The phrase can also be taken without sarcasm, however, and still speak to the research theme: if nonviolence is about rejecting violence, then *isn’t* all violence bad? Should nonviolence theory and work not at least acknowledge all forms of violence, attempt to understand them and their relationship with nonviolence work, and try to work against them? And what happens if it does? These are some

examples of the less formal questions which form the basis of this research project, and which later in this chapter become the key research questions for this thesis.

Nonviolence as a hurrah-word

The first part of this thesis examines and reviews the history of and literature on nonviolent resistance, focusing especially on tracing the emergence of a popular conception of nonviolence as unproblematically “not violent”, i.e. clearly without violence. This narrative has, I argue, turned the concept of nonviolent civil resistance into what in Danish is called a “hurrah-word”. A hurrah-word is a word that most people use in a positive sense, because it is assumed to be universally good and universally understood. It is a word that makes speakers and listeners alike react instinctively with an inner “hurrah” because of these assumptions, or is sometimes described as “engendering a warm glow and drawing people to them” (Dinham, 2007, 181). Danish Communications scholar Leif Becker Jensen (2003, 149, my translation) argues that although hurrah-words are known as concepts which lead to an instinctive “hurrah”, they can at the same time elicit very vague or uncommitted reactions, precisely because they are so “obviously right and correct that no one would dream to object to them”. The reason for these two, sometimes simultaneous, reactions, is that terms that are hurrah-words are “at the top of the linguistic abstraction-ladder”, meaning that they have no clear substance (*ibid*). This makes any communication using hurrah-words sound uncontroversial and unifying despite underlying disagreements and tensions, “because we can pour our own ideas into the concept and believe that we agree – even when we disagree” (*ibid*, 150). Jensen (*ibid*, 151) uses the example of asking: what does it mean for a company to state that “loyalty” is a central value? Is this loyalty to “the boss, the colleagues, the customers”, all of which could easily be contending principles? (*ibid*). Other examples could be terms such as “creativity”, “leadership”, “participation” and “fairness” (Dinham, 2007, 181; Griffiths, 2009, 86).

Classic examples of political hurrah-words are words such as “freedom” and “democracy”, which are widely agreed on as positives, but are also somewhat vague and empty if not qualified in any way. For example, what does it mean to “fight for freedom” or “strengthen democracy”? It can mean a number of things, but this will not have to be investigated in order to gain a positive reaction and support for a cause. Importantly, then, hurrah-words are not necessarily bad things dressed up to be good – in fact, they are often good things in some sense, but by being so universally assumed

to be the very best thing, or perfect, or infallible, they lose their substance, and through that, some of their power for change. Griffiths (2009, 86) describes hurrah-words as “terms which attract general approval”, but which “mean different things to different people, depending on their various political and moral commitments”.

In her discussion of the concept of nonviolent resistance, Judith Stiehm (1968, 29) describes a parallel between the concepts of “democracy” and “nonviolent resistance” which fits well with describing these as hurrah-words. She notes that:

The supporters of each [concept] are confused as to whether they are 1) advocating a technique which is inherently good and to be used regardless of result, or whether they are 2) conditionally urging their technique because it is sure to bring the best possible result, or whether they are 3) devoted to a principle which is an end and one so desirable as to justify the use of its negation in order to win it (i.e. violence can be used to achieve nonviolence or war to win peace, and authority to create democracy) (Stiehm, 1968, 29).

This discussion illustrates how an agreement of support between different people may disguise central and important differences in the reasoning for this support; differences which will likely change how actions are approached, what arguments and tactics are used, and ultimately, what the end goal actually is for different actors. Within the context of this thesis, attempts to move away from a hurrah-word treatment of nonviolent resistance would mean to begin asking questions such as: What does it mean if it is a central part of nonviolent resistance to be against, or at least strategically renounce the use of, violence? Violence against who? And what counts as violence? Who is prioritised if some violence in some form is inevitable? In this way, this thesis aims to interrogate more thoroughly what is meant by “nonviolent resistance”, and complicate its meaning. This is not done with the aim of weakening or reject the idea of nonviolence resistance because it is less than perfect or universally agreed on, but the exact opposite: the aim here is to strengthen the conception and understanding of nonviolence through this complication of meaning and the further exploration springing from this.

Nonviolence as purity politics

These characteristics of our understanding of nonviolent resistance can also usefully be placed in a framework of “purity politics” as developed by Alexis Shotwell (2016). Although Shotwell’s particular frame of analysis has not, to my knowledge, been applied to the field of nonviolence before, the idea of linking violence and nonviolence to concepts such as purity or other ethically loaded terms is not new. Vinthagen (2015, 65) even demonstrates that ethical connotations (rather than an instrumental or consequentialist definition of violence) are at the root of the term “violence”, when in early Christianity the term “evil” would be used instead of violent. Given this early Christian fusion of “evil” and “violent”, it is perhaps unsurprising that an early critique of purist tendencies within pacifism are Reinhold Niebuhr’s critiques of religious pacifism from the late 1920s onwards. Although at different times during his life Niebuhr was a declared pacifist, he eventually abandoned the label and provided a powerful and renowned critique of pacifism instead (Childress, 1974, 468). This critique is symptomatic of Niebuhr’s wider preoccupation within political theory in which he focused on “the impossibility of realizing certain ideals ... and the conflicts between various norms which complicate the moral life” (*ibid*, 470). Fundamentally, Niebuhr argues against the view that violence is “intrinsically evil”, because only the motive or intention of an act can be intrinsically evil (*ibid*, 469). Although Niebuhr was then critical of purist theories of pacifism or nonviolence, because this was described by him as both impossible and overly simplistic, he was also critical of so-called pragmatic pacifism, or the version of pacifism which seeks to provide a political alternative to war, force, and coercion (*ibid*, 473-474). Both the “religious absolutis[t]” and pragmatic strands of pacifism are critiqued by Niebuhr as, in essence, ignoring the realities and complexities of a political world of “relative justice” (*ibid*, 475).

The tension or discussion around ideas of “purity”, or pure pacifism or nonviolence is also seen from early on in nonviolent movements, such as in Isserman’s (1986) discussion of the American pacifist movement in the 1950s and 1960s. In the essay, Isserman (1986, 53-54) traces the tension between individual activists’ quest for actions which would show their personal conviction even at the cost of “effective political influence” on the one hand, and a search for methods which would build the movement, recruit members, and increase the effectiveness of tactics on the other. This tension is also relevant to a number of discussions within this thesis, such as the discussion of self-sacrifice as a nonviolent resistance tactic. Isserman (*ibid*, 54) summarises this tension as one

between “absolute moral purity and political expediency”. This intense focus on personal commitment and sacrifice was in the beginning focused on the idea of “moral witness”; that is, attracting attention to a certain problematic or harmful action or issue (for example nuclear weapons production), but later developed to also aim at obstruction such as disrupting military actions, building projects and so on (*ibid*). The “irony” which the essay points to is that this intensely individualistic, purist outlook which led to individuals putting their own bodies on the line for the cause, was part of the “spirit” of individual risk and sacrifice as the ultimate form of activism which later led to choices of violent tactics (*ibid*, 61-62). Another purist element of this early American pacifism which can be problematised within the themes of this thesis is the view that the projects these early pacifists were trying to obstruct were a matter of “sin and repentance: workers were accomplices to murder as long as they contributed their labor to building missile bases and submarines” (*ibid*, 58). This “othering” of workers, and simplistic view of the individual worker as an accomplice and responsible for the overall consequences, instead of people with few other choices for making a living, is another example of the co-opting of the basic argument that all violence is bad.

Stiehm (1968, 24) also points to the “urge to attain or maintain moral purity” as central to pacifism and particularly to individuals’ commitment to this. She writes further that:

this form of nonviolent theory sees the individual either as an isolate with his duty chiefly owing to God, or as a being equally bound to all other humans. Either assumption helps to make theory tidy but poorly reflects the complexities of life as it is lived ... The resultant mood of conscientious nonviolence is too often one of perfectionism, chiasm, and anarchistic individualism (Stiehm, 1968, 25).

While these earlier examples of purist approaches to nonviolence are primarily related to the principled strand of nonviolence, or pacifism, this thesis will demonstrate at various points that a purist outlook is also prevalent in strategic nonviolence discussions and literature, although often with different reasons given for the need for purity and mostly framing it as the more normatively neutral-sounding “nonviolent discipline” (e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 146; Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 587-588). Further, a purist framework can be identified in strategic nonviolence studies in the literature’s approach to the occurrence of small amounts of violence in campaigns

classified as nonviolent. As Case (2018, 20) writes, nonviolence research shows overwhelmingly that a “purely” nonviolent struggle is extremely rare, but after acknowledging this, most nonviolence research goes on to virtually ignore the violent actions and tactics that did form a part of the nonviolent campaign, thereby in reality treating complicated and mixed cases as pure nonviolence.

More recent research indicates that this association of violence meaning “evil” or “bad” is still prevalent. For example, Triplett et al. (2016, 332, 340-345) outline the various meanings that violence can hold, and found in their empirical study that although there are significant variations in how individuals perceive violence when asked about a specific situation, individual perceptions of what counts as violence are overwhelmingly tied to ideas of “bad” and “good”, rather than defining all instances of physical force or harm as violence. This association is perhaps a factor in explaining the prevalence of purist tendencies and aims within nonviolent movements and literature. If violence is defined by being “bad”, rather than as a specific form of physical force, then an instinctive reaction away from thinking about or associating with violence makes sense, as does a reverse assumption that nonviolence must then be inherently “good”. This theme forms part of the underlying framework for conceptualising thinking on nonviolence throughout this thesis.

Alexis Shotwell’s 2016 book *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* provides an excellent framework for understanding the purist aspects of present understandings of nonviolence. The book argues that the growth of what Shotwell names “purity politics” means the rise of a search for, and idea of, a “pure” state of living and acting, both personally and politically. By this, Shotwell means a state in which an individual is free of “toxic” or “harmful” parts of human society (Shotwell, 2016, 8-9). She describes purity politics or purism as:

One bad but common approach to devastation in all its forms. It is a common approach for anyone who attempts to meet and control a complex situation that is fundamentally outside our control. It is a bad approach because it shuts down precisely the field of possibility that might allow us to take better collective action against the destruction of the world in all its strange, delightful, impure frolic. Purism is a de-collectivizing, de-mobilizing, paradoxical politics of despair (Shotwell, 2016, 8-9).

This emphasis on purity politics as “de-collectivizing” is an immediate contrast to the topic of this thesis, which is precisely about mobilisation of large collectives into nonviolent action.

However, purity politics is still a highly relevant framework with which to understand much of the thinking and acting within nonviolent resistance today. An obvious example is the concept of “voluntary suffering”, discussed later in this thesis, which is a highly individualistic conception of the consequence of violence, by arguing that by risking violence, imprisonment, or even death, a nonviolent protester is only risking harm to themselves, thus ignoring bonds of family, community, love, dependence etc. which all work to spread the consequences of the suffering to the people with which the voluntary sufferer is connected. This highly individualistic and isolationist outlook is not, however, only relevant in terms of individual activists. It is also applicable to nonviolence theory in the sense that purity politics does not only create individuals with “pure” lives, but also “pure” groups, by working “to delineate an inside and an outside” (Shotwell, 2016, 13), a new way of framing and creating an “us” and a “them”. In this sense, then, a purist view of nonviolence can work against mobilisation and the building of collectives, since only “pure” resisters can be let in to the collective.

Instead of a purist approach, Shotwell (*ibid*, 5) suggests rejecting the very idea of a “pure” natural state as the starting point for assessing individual and collective action, and instead starting from a place of culpability and complicity and building political theories of social change from there. If this starting point is used for thinking about nonviolent ways of creating social change, this becomes in part about moving away from thinking of violence versus nonviolence as a black-and-white case of purity or impurity, good or bad. As her call to action from this point of compromise and complicity, Shotwell argues that:

What’s needed, instead of a pretence to purity that is impossible in the actually existing world, is something else. We need to shape better practices of responsibility and memory for our placement in relation to the past, our implication in the present, and our potential creation of different futures (Shotwell, 2016, 7-8).

To view present conceptions of nonviolence through the lens of purity politics, and to reject this purist aspiration and assumption, is a promising way of reckoning with the fact that violence *does* play a role in nonviolent actions, movements, politics, and theory, without risking a problematically equalising narrative of every action and tactic for social change being equally bad because they all involve violence in some way. As Shotwell (*ibid*, 6-7) writes, “[w]e’re hypocrites,

maybe, but that doesn't encompass the nature of the problem that complexity poses for us" because "[i]f hypocrisy were the problem, really it wouldn't be much of a problem; at least on the surface, it is something we could give up". In other words, and in the context of this project, the fact that violence plays a role, and that nonviolent activists and advocates are themselves violent in different ways, could perhaps be construed as an attempt to brand them as hypocrites when claiming and identifying with the nonviolence label. That, however, is not the argument here, and again, if it was, it would be a lot less complicated than the pictures painted in the following chapters.

Key research questions and methods

The key research questions for this project came from the idea of formulating a non-purist version of nonviolence theory, and an interest in the contested and contestable, messy, undefined, grey-area, complicit and compromised aspects of nonviolent civil resistance. Looking closely at the role of violence, and differing definitions of violence, is one way to do so, and it is the focus for this project. This presents two key research questions for the thesis:

- 1: What are the present assumptions around the definition of violence and the definitional line(s) between violence and nonviolence in the field, and what are the implications of this?
- 2: What are some ways in which violence occurs in nonviolent civil resistance and how does nonviolence theory start to make sense of this?

This thesis is a theoretical research project, which spends significant time examining and interrogating concepts and lines of argument in order to shed light on these two questions. The reasons for this are described throughout the thesis, but primarily in Chapter Two, where the question of the importance of methodology to understanding the field of nonviolence studies is discussed. It is, however, an attempt to produce theoretical analysis with practical implications; that is, the aim is to speak about and to issues that are directly relevant in the practice of nonviolent resistance. This attempt fits into what Bevington and Dixon (2005, 186) call "movement-relevant theory", an approach which responds to the problem in social movement theory that activists do not read the dominant theories and writings in social movement studies, or if they do, do not find them relevant. Rather than trying to strengthen the link between practice and research by relying almost exclusively on observation-based methodologies, Bevington and Dixon (*ibid*, 189) look to the

product of the research rather than the data in order to describe movement-relevant theory, which is centred around the requirement that theory has relevance and produces “useable knowledge” for activists and practitioners. Movement-centred theory “seeks to draw out useful information from a variety of contexts and translate it into a form that is more readily applicable by movements to new situations – i.e. theory” (*ibid*). Although this particular thesis does not necessarily produce useable information for movements in the form of ready-made tricks, procedures, or training manuals for activists, I would argue that the questions raised here, and the arguments and theories that spring from them, are, in fact, useful and important for activists. The fact that the divisions and tensions discussed here have already been the cause of contention and conflict within activist communities, as will be demonstrated throughout this thesis, speaks in itself to the fact that the issues are not invented for the sake of abstract debates, but already existing ones. The aim of this thesis is to start developing ways of understanding these tensions and possible avenues for solving or addressing them.

To complement the theoretical and conceptual analysis of the thesis, a number of movements are examined as cases illustrating the questions and tensions that are brought up. Although case study methodologies have been “the primary mode of inquiry in political science”, they have been declining in popularity (Crasnow, 2019, 40). Instead, statistical, quantitative, and experimental approaches have increasingly dominating the field (*ibid*, 41). This has arguably also been seen in nonviolence literature with the rising popularity and prominence of statistical analysis, notably Chenoweth and Stephan and the various NAVCO datasets (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013; Chenoweth, Pinckney, and Lewis, 2018).

Crasnow (2019, 40) describes case study analysis as “the close examination of a case” in order to “seek explanations of a variety of phenomena”, focusing on a certain “narrative presentation of the details relevant” to the “aims of the research”. Case study examination can add to social science research in a number of ways, such as:

the investigation of rare events; research design; providing evidence for (or against) hypothesized causal mechanisms; identification of confounders or omitted variables; revealing the limits of general causal claims; informing decisions about implementing policy; and teaching sensitivity to context (Crasnow, 2019, 44).

Within this thesis, case studies are primarily used to reveal and examine “the limits of general causal claims” (Crasnow, 2019, 44) through looking at both the ways in which these causal mechanisms may not work as reliably as suggested in the literature, but also at unintended and/or unexplored consequences of these mechanisms. This project also maintains that a focus on the context of a given campaign is crucial to keep in mind, and that the narrative that nonviolence knowledge is transferable across time and contexts with no qualification is problematic. As Stanko argues while introducing a research project on the meanings of violence and violence in the United Kingdom:

it is essential for researchers, policy makers and front-line workers to take the context of violence seriously. Understanding the context of violence means that we specify what happened, when, where and between whom as the beginning in our search to challenge the use of violence ... All of these elements combine to create a message from the meaning of violence. Not everyone will hear the message in the same way – and the message may be the spark for a challenge (Stanko, 2003, 11).

In this way, the case studies in this project also fulfil the function of “teaching sensitivity to context” which is an underlying focus in this thesis (Crasnow, 2019, 44).

Through the combination of a close, narrative analysis of cases and a conceptual and theoretical argument, this thesis draws on central parts of the hermeneutic tradition. In the literature review of this thesis, nonviolence literature will be described as predominantly influenced by naturalist views of concepts and the social world. In contrast, Bevir and Kedar (2008, 505) describe the hermeneutic tradition as the most clear and consistent anti-naturalist methodology. Some core tenets of hermeneutic analysis in the social sciences were articulated by Max Weber, who “insisted that causal explanation in social science relied in large part on *verstehen* (interpretive understanding) [and] on the singularity of such causal explanation”, that is, on explanations that take into consideration context and particularity (*ibid*). This particular outlook is, I argue, particularly well suited to the task of movement-relevant theory. This is because an anti-naturalist and/or hermeneutic approach rejects the naturalist “unidirectional subject-object relationship” in which the social scientist is seen “as the only agent involved in crafting explanations” while the object –

nonviolent campaigns and movements – are left to be “passive objects to be studied” (*ibid*, 507). As Bevir and Kedar write:

In contrast, anti-naturalists often conceive of explanation as the product of a kind of dialogue between social scientists and those they study. Social science generally involves a subject-subject interaction in which the scholar responds to the interpretations or meanings of the relevant social actors. It involves a ‘fusion of horizons,’ that is, a process of reaching some kind of shared interpretation in which the social scientists own views are often transformed. An encounter with the beliefs or meanings of social actors always has the potential to send out ripples through a scholars own beliefs, altering their understanding of, say, their research agendas, the traditions in which they work, or their normative commitments (Bever and Kedar, 2008, 507).

The recognition and conceptualisation of this two-way relationship is useful for creating movement-relevant theory, because the influence of practitioners’ views, concerns, and conceptualisations on those of the social scientist is seen as an integral part of doing social science, rather than as an obstacle to be overcome or explained away. This is evident in this thesis in, for example, the discussion of property damage in the chapter on violence definitions: this topic is included mainly because many activists disagree with or question the way in which property damage is most often described as violence within the literature. These influences are, however, more or less subtle and conscious, and therefore affect research in a number of ways.

The cases used for examples are mainly well-known and thoroughly described ones. In choosing the cases for the historical overview of nonviolence this was entirely intentional, since the aim was to illustrate a popular and wide-spread narrative of nonviolent history. For more contemporary cases, choosing examples with plenty of materials written about them – both academic and journalistic – allowed me to go deeper in the analysis and find more points of discussion than less studied cases, which would on the other hand perhaps have been a better choice for a project based on empirical and field research. Further, the fact that the contemporary cases analysed are resistance campaigns in liberal democracies provides one specific (although major) aspect of the importance of context, a point which is explored throughout this thesis. The importance of context here is that although nonviolence literature is used by organisers in liberal

democracies, the literature itself is based overwhelmingly on resistance campaigns against or within authoritarian regimes. This means that some of the mechanisms and dynamics explained in the literature may have to be adapted to a significantly different context, or may simply not work. This argument appears at different points in the thesis while discussing the case studies.

This research project is, then, a theoretical or conceptual exploration of nonviolent resistance, focusing on the way that the occurrence of violence, and definitions (or the lack thereof) of violence impacts nonviolent resistance. The thesis draws on hermeneutic approaches to understand nonviolent resistance through case studies and discourses, both in the academic literature and in the popular narrative of the history of nonviolent resistance. Despite this move into theories, arguments, and concepts, the aim is to produce research and writing which is movement-centred in the sense that it speaks to issues and concerns that impact actual organising and practicing of nonviolent resistance.

Overview of the thesis

The following section will briefly outline the main content and arguments of the rest of the thesis, as well as how they relate to the two key research questions. Overall, this thesis can be described as consisting of two major parts: the first part, chapters two to four, lays the foundation for the thesis argument, by illustrating how the research questions are relevant and can be answered using present nonviolence literature, looking at the history of nonviolent resistance, and starting to establish an overview of possible conceptions and definitions of violence. The second part, consisting of chapters five to seven looks at concrete “issues” or ways in which violence, and definitions of violence, actually do play a role in the practice of nonviolent resistance. This part makes use of more recent and contemporary nonviolent resistance movements in order to illustrate and illuminate this further.

Chapter Two is a review of the main nonviolence literature and addresses the first research question. The chapter introduces the field of nonviolent resistance literature and the main theorists within it. The distinction between strategic and principled nonviolence is introduced as important within the general field, although for the purposes of this particular project, it will be argued that the distinction is not crucial, since most of the issues raised will apply to both strands in some way. The literature review does not attempt to reach a single definition of nonviolent resistance, but

focuses precisely on the diversity of conceptions and definitions, and on the definitional strategies employed in different pieces of literature in order to define or conceptualise what nonviolent civil resistance is. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of some of the key dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent resistance, or, as it is often phrased, why and how nonviolence works.

Chapter Three provides a fairly brief history of nonviolent resistance, focusing on three of the main heroes of popular narratives of nonviolence: Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr. While the chapter focuses, especially in the first part, on the most well-known and popular aspects and narratives of these three leaders and the resistance movements they were part of, the second part starts to touch on the complications and less “pure” aspects of these struggles and leaders. The history chapter shows and discusses different ways in which both a highly pragmatic approach to methods, and the occurrence of violence, played a role in the movements, problematises the “lone male hero” version of nonviolent struggle which the popular narrative puts forward, and investigates the tension between specificity and universalism in the struggles and their ideals. In this way, the history chapter addresses the first question by demonstrating the lack of focus on definitional questions around violence and nonviolence within the popular narrative of nonviolence history, despite the blurry nature of these lines and the importance of them; but also the second, by demonstrating that even in these iconic movements, violence played a crucial role in a number of ways.

Chapter Four follows from the establishment in the previous two chapters of the complicated and contested nature of the concept of violence, as well as its importance to understanding the field of nonviolence. To add to this argument, Chapter Four looks more closely at the concept of violence itself. The chapter draws on several academic disciplines, including political theory, sociology, criminology, psychology, philosophy, and of course nonviolence theory, to discuss a number of different conceptions of violence, different groups of definitions, and different definitional lines used to mark the limits around the concept of violence. The discussion also touches on the rhetorical weight that the term violence holds, that is, the way in which violence is used to mark clearly what actions are “good” or “bad,” or what people or groups of people are “good” or “bad”, by branding these as either violent or not violent (often using the term “force” instead of violence). The different discussions and definitions covered in the chapter are tools for the research project to argue its case that violence is not a simple, static phenomenon, and that

therefore, discussing and looking at violence as a part of nonviolence theory is an ongoing and dynamic process. However, despite the seemingly never-ending potential discussion, it is crucially important for the field of nonviolence theory and practice to continue to do so, because not only does violence play a role, how violence is defined by different actors has important implications, and is at the core of a number of conflicts and contestations within and towards nonviolent activism.

Chapter Five is the first of the three “issue” chapters, which look at different ways in which violence and definitions of violence impact nonviolent resistance. The chapter looks at the occurrence of violence against nonviolent protesters by their opponent. This occurrence of violence is the basis of a central and famous dynamic of nonviolent civil resistance, the backfire effect. In this dynamic, very public and at times extreme acts of violence become a potential catalyst for movement success or progress through a rise in sympathy and condemnation of the opponent. The integrity of violence to this process has not, however, led to much questioning of whether these scenarios weaken or complicate claims that a campaign is nonviolent. While the chapter does not attempt to argue against this classification, it does try to take seriously the normative issues that arise with this occurrence of violence, such as the role of suffering and sacrifice that are at the heart of theories of backfire, the assumptions made about the universality of sympathetic reactions, and the tendency to expect the performance of a narrow, specific form of respectability from protesters in order to achieve sympathy.

Chapter Six looks at the occurrence of different forms of violence within nonviolent movements. These forms of violence include both physical and non-physical harm, and draws on a number of the violence definitions from Chapter Four. The chapter begins by examining occurrences of violence that are widely agreed on as being violent, such as the sexual assaults and gendered violence that happened in Occupy camps in 2011, and the discussions and reactions following this. While these incidents are then widely recognised as violent, the question of the extent to which this violence “mattered” to the core of Occupy’s work, or to the idea of nonviolent resistance, was more controversial. The chapter aims to demonstrate, however, that these occurrences of violence should matter to research and thinking on nonviolent resistance. The chapter spans both research questions, since it also looks at controversy and debates over definitional lines around violence. The chapter therefore also examines wider understandings of violence, such as the masking and

entrenchment of inequalities and hierarchies within movements, which can be enabled by an assumption of equality between members when this is not the case.

Chapter Seven focuses on collective identity, the process of collective identity formation, and issues of violence, marginalisation, and repression that come with this. The focus on collective identity formation means that the chapter looks at the ways in which this process can lead to silencing or exclusion of contestations of violence, especially looking at aspects of expressed collective identities such as universal and apolitical messaging, and the classic nonviolent doctrine of respecting and including everyone without recognising that this is rarely practically possible. This leads to an exploration of competing meanings of concepts such as inclusion and diversity and examines the ways in which some interpretations of these further marginalise groups or communities that are already marginalised. In this way, appeals to universal love and tolerance as a simple and self-evident thing – a hurrah-word, if you will – are critiqued and rejected, and the importance of acknowledging and acting on intersecting forms of violence is emphasised.

Chapter Eight draws on the insights from the previous chapters to present a conclusion of this work and potential paths for future investigations. The conclusion chapter also acknowledges and discusses that this thesis presents a potentially huge challenge to nonviolent resistance by widening the scope of what forms of violence and repression are argued to be integral to the nonviolence label. However, the chapter also argues that this is not an attempt to argue that all of this is possible at all times, but rather to open the space of nonviolence theory and research up for discussion and contestation of this, and to not accept pre-defined and implied definitional boundaries of what can and cannot be discussed or cared about as part of what it means to be a nonviolent movement.

Chapter Two: Nonviolence Literature Review

In 2018 a new nonviolent climate movement appeared in the UK and quickly spread to other countries. The group, Extinction Rebellion (XR), was launched in October 2018 and attracted attention for its tactics of highly disruptive, mass civil disobedience (Gunningham, 2019, 197-198 ; Slaven and Heydon, 2020, 59; Westwell and Bunting, 2020, 546). Although the emergence of Extinction Rebellion seemed sudden to spectators, and the movement grew unusually fast in the public eye, the launch of Extinction Rebellion was the result of discussion and planning between the founders since at least 2016 (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020). Extinction Rebellion has been labelled one of “the two most important grass-roots climate organisations that have emerged to date” (Gunningham, 2019, 195-196), signifying the enormous attention that the group has already attracted. In April 2019, Extinction Rebellion launched another series of actions in various locations, during which it was estimated that around 6000 people took part in London alone, blocking major bridges, gluing themselves to trains, and causing disruption through a host of other actions attracting both national and international attention (Gunningham, 2019, 197-198; Westwell and Bunting, 2020, 546). Extinction Rebellion UK was launched with three pre-determined key demands to the UK government: “it must ‘tell the truth’ about the global climate crisis and declare a climate emergency; commit to net-zero carbon emissions by 2025; and establish a citizens assembly to oversee the transition towards climate justice” (Westwell and Bunting, 2020, 546).

What is noteworthy about Extinction Rebellion, especially in the present context, is their intense focus on using science and academic knowledge as a form of social and political capital to raise the status and urgency of their arguments, and of the movement. That is, the group used climate change science extensively in their communication of the urgency of the problem, but also used social science in a similar way to make their argument that their particular version of nonviolent resistance was “the right way” to achieve radical changes towards sustainability. The XR founders stated in materials produced by themselves as well as media interviews that they had been “directly inspired by [Erica Chenoweth’s] findings” (Robson, 2019; Farrell et al., 2019, 126), particularly Chenoweth’s arguments that amongst the campaigns that formed their dataset, “[t]here weren’t any campaigns that had failed after they had achieved 3.5% participation during a peak event”, the so-called “3.5% rule” (Robson, 2019; Case, 2018, 25). In the Extinction Rebellion handbook one of the founding members, Sam Knights, describes the creation of Extinction Rebellion

beginning with “fifteen people who had studied and researched *the* way to achieve radical social change” (Farrell et al., 2019, 9, my emphasis). Another founding member, Roger Hallam, also expressed a sense of significant difference (and arguably superiority) to other social movements, writing that “[u]nlike many of the spontaneous social-media-fuelled rebellions and uprisings in recent years, Extinction Rebellion has been carefully planned. For several years a group of academics and activists have been working” and researching approaches and models for social change which would avoid the “failed” attempts so far (*ibid*, 99). After establishing the group, the fifteen founders toured the UK giving talks to build a movement, talks described by themselves as “clear, straightforward and led by science. We walked people through the facts and then, at the end of the presentation, provided a necessary and rational response: mass civil disobedience” (*ibid*, 10). While Extinction Rebellion then used their extensive research to raise their own legitimacy, Chenoweth also passed legitimacy to the group through an “expert” endorsement, saying to the BBC in 2019:

They are up against a lot of inertia ... But I think that they have an incredibly thoughtful and strategic core. And they seem to have all the right instincts about how to develop and teach through a nonviolent resistance campaign (Robson, 2019).

Although Extinction Rebellion were unusually direct in referencing their use of nonviolent resistance research, it was not the first time that this area of academic study had a clear impact on the conduct and tactical choices of resistance movements. For example, influential nonviolence scholar Gene Sharp is widely seen as having inspired a number of uprisings in the Arab Spring in 2011 (Walters, 2018) and nonviolence training centres around the world use the research produced in universities to train grass-roots activists and organisers (CANVAS 2020a; CANVAS 2020b; ICNC 2020).

This demonstrates that nonviolent resistance theory is incredibly important in shaping activist and organiser decisions about how to start and conduct resistance campaigns, and how to fundamentally think about nonviolent civil resistance, or, indeed resistance altogether – that is, whether to choose violent or nonviolent tactics in the first place. However, it is less clear in popular narratives what exactly nonviolent resistance is, what its relationship to violence is, and what implications arise from this relationship. This literature review will demonstrate that this lack of clarity is to some extent also a feature of the research and academic literature on nonviolent

resistance.

This chapter will introduce the field of nonviolent resistance literature and its main theorists. It will do so by firstly providing a brief overview of the field, its methodology, and the importance of remembering context when looking at an analysis of a given nonviolent campaign or tactic. After that, arguably the greatest divide within the field - between strategic and principled nonviolence - will be discussed, and the two strands will be briefly introduced, followed by arguments in favour of viewing the two strands not as separate, but as different parts or sides to the same concept of nonviolence. Following this, the chapter will outline different strategies used in the literature to define or conceptualise nonviolent resistance and discuss the implications of these strategies. The last part of the chapter will look a little closer at the dynamics of nonviolent resistance, or, as the literature frequently phrases it, why and how nonviolence works. This section provides a further understanding of how nonviolent resistance is conceptualised and understood - in the absence of clear and coherent definitions - within the literature.

It should be noted that for the purposes of this thesis, a number of different terms are used interchangeably to describe the field covered, such as civil resistance, nonviolent resistance, nonviolent social movement, nonviolent struggles etc. The use of these terms as describing essentially the same concept is also seen in key literature in the area (for example Bartkowski ed, 2013, 4; Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013, 273).

Introduction to the field

The field of nonviolence studies, or nonviolent civil resistance studies, is relatively new, but rapidly growing (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 15). Carter (2009, 25), for example, notes the “growing awareness” and increasing use of nonviolent civil resistance in recent decades, although the method has been analysed and described theoretically “since the 1930s”.

Although peace movements had existed for much longer, and Gandhi had practiced and promoted systematic thought and practice of nonviolence before this, the academic study of nonviolence is most often attributed to the three scholars Richard Gregg, Gene Sharp, and Johan Galtung, starting from the 1950s and 1960s with the establishment of academic programs, institutes, and journals (Baldoli, 2019, 11; Cortright, 2008, 2). Since these writers, the field of nonviolence studies has continued to grow, both with the establishment of more research centres

and academic programs, but also through nonviolence training centres for activists and organisers to learn nonviolent resistance skills (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 223-225; CANVAS, 2020a; INCN 2020). With the growth of nonviolence studies has also come a call from nonviolence scholars to have this area of study recognised in more traditional fields such as security and conflict studies (e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 5), which will be discussed further as part of the strategic nonviolence branch of nonviolence studies.

It is important when discussing nonviolent action and nonviolence literature to remember that not all forms of political action that are done without the use of violence are included in the concept of nonviolent resistance. Nonviolent action does not include all politically motivated actions that do not use violence, but rather, actions that fall outside of institutional and commonly agreed on channels (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 12; Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013, 271-273; Sharp, 1959, 45). That is to say, actions such as voting, being a member of a political party to influence the choosing of candidates, lobbying, etc are not considered 'nonviolent resistance'. Many nonviolent resistance methods are also illegal actions (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 12).

Another definition employed by some nonviolence authors is that of a "nonviolent campaign" rather than simply nonviolent actions more vaguely. This is defined as:

a series of observable, continual tactics in pursuit of a political objective. A campaign can last anywhere from days to years. Campaigns have discernible leadership and often have names, distinguishing them from random riots or spontaneous mass acts. Usually campaigns have distinguishable beginning and end points (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 14).

Thus, although individual political events may be one of the nonviolent tactics included in nonviolence literature, one event will not necessarily be counted in the literature as a nonviolent campaign, but rather, a campaign would involve the use of several tactics over a period of time (Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013, 273).

Observation-based methodologies: the power of example

Since early studies of nonviolence such as Richard Gregg's writings on Gandhi, the field of nonviolence studies has been closely connected with the practice of nonviolent resistance (Gregg, 1936; Martin, 2015, 162). This connection is an important part of understanding the field of nonviolence literature. The connection is a two-way one, in which nonviolence theory also responds

to calls for “movement relevant theory” as described by Bevington and Dixon (2005). For example, the online journal *Interface* explicitly describes itself as a way for nonviolence academics to communicate their knowledge to activists, and with a focus on what activists and organisers need to know more about (*Interface*, 2020). Another example is the “tradition of scholar-activists”, a concept which promotes the idea that scholarship can direct and participate in advocacy work (Romero, 2020, 10). Although the concept of the scholar-activist does not stem from, or is exclusive to, the field of nonviolent resistance, it is prominent in the field (Borpujari, 2014; Kurtz and Smithey, 2018, 15). Finally, as Martin (2015, 158) points out, nonviolence literature is often willing to “take sides” in its use of language, when for example naming an event a “protest” rather than the more negatively loaded term “riot”. Martin (in Kurtz and Smithey, 2018, xx) later argues that “[m]any social analysts would like their studies to be useful to activists”.

Apart from this close connection to practice and observation, the field of civil resistance studies can be understood as strongly influenced by naturalist assumptions and aims, that is, “the idea that the human sciences should strive to develop predictive and causal explanations akin to those found in the natural sciences” (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 504). What this means is that a field of human or social science, such as civil resistance research, is based on an assumption that it is possible to “study fixed objects of inquiry that possess observable and, at least to some extent, measurable properties, such that they are amenable to explanations in terms of general laws” (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 504). While these naturalist views are perhaps especially obvious in the more recent statistically based nonviolence literature such as the NAVCO datasets (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013; Chenoweth, Pinckney, and Lewis, 2018), the influence is clear on a number of other nonviolence studies, including Sharp’s descriptions of different nonviolent techniques and tactics (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973) and even qualitative studies (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 514). For example, the classification of different nonviolent actions as being the same technique with identifiable properties and dynamics across a number of contexts is an attempt to “point toward classifications, correlations, or other regularities that hold across various cases” and to overcome the “obstacles” of “historical contingency and contextual specificity ... in the search for cross-temporal and cross-cultural regularities”, a strongly naturalist methodology (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 506).

These two factors - a close connection to practice and naturalist assumptions - mean that

defining “nonviolent resistance” tends to spring from observations of campaigns and actions that are deemed nonviolent, and from this collection of different manifestations, a more or less vague idea of the concept of nonviolent resistance as such springs. Further, authors such as Carter (2009, 25) emphasise that one of the main arguments for nonviolent civil resistance - that it is effective - stems not from theory, but mainly from “the power of example”. Authors such as Brian Martin (2015, 162) suggest that this approach will continue in the future of nonviolence literature, but Martin does argue that more “ambiguous” and “less visible” cases of nonviolence, rather than the major, successful cases that have been the main focus so far, should be incorporated more in the field to improve research. This close monitoring of nonviolent campaigns as a central way to understand nonviolence better is demonstrated for example when Carter (2009, 40-41) discusses more recent uprisings and writes that “[t]he books on civil resistance have not however had time to catch up with Nepal 2006, or the recent wave of protest against rigged elections in post-communist regimes”, and describes an image of a protest as “[e]vents in Nepal marching ahead of the literature”. These phrasings are an indication of how important it is perceived within the literature to be constantly updating as new events unfold. This is of course not surprising for observation-based research, or necessarily an issue in itself; however, it is important to keep this in mind when thinking of the extent to which nonviolence literature is a useful prescriptive tool for what should be done in future nonviolent resistance, and which options and tactics are available for nonviolent campaigns.

Basing nonviolence literature on observations rather than theoretical concepts or categories also means that this area of research is often interdisciplinary, both in terms of drawing on different academic disciplines, and attempting to speak to, or work within, several fields (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 6; Martin, 2015, 162). The comparative method is important in civil resistance literature (e.g. Kurt Schock’s 2015 book *Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggles*), which is once again compatible with a strong focus on observation-based methodologies, and is used to attempt to explain why outcomes of nonviolent campaigns can be drastically different (Carter, 2009, 34), and why nonviolent campaigns sometimes fail, or why they succeed more often than violent ones (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011).

Another way in which naturalist tendencies are visible is the tendency towards essentialism in the understanding of the concept of nonviolence. Essentialism in concept formation can be

understood to occur “whenever social science concepts are defined in ways that ignore the historical specificity of the various objects to which they refer” (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 507). This means that an essentialist theory of nonviolence could be argued to be one which attempts to describe rules, dynamics, and success rates for nonviolent campaigns across contexts of time, culture, society, etc. in order to “postulate cross-temporal and cross-cultural regularities” (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 507).

While analysis of nonviolent resistance campaigns mostly pays some degree of attention to the context of the given campaign, civil resistance literature does aim to be able to draw conclusions and generalisations across contexts and countries (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 16, 221; Sommer et al., 2019, 221). This thesis promotes a degree of scepticism and critique of this aim and argues that the context of a specific campaign is important to the specific tactics and options available. For example, although Chenoweth and Stephan’s 2011 book *How Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* has been used as an inspiration for nonviolent movements operating within liberal democracies (e.g. Extinction Rebellion, see Robson, 2019), the majority of the cases studied in the book are campaigns against highly repressive regimes (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 88, 233-236). While the book states that based on the findings, it can be shown that “[n]onviolent campaigns succeed against democracies and non-democracies, weak and powerful opponents, conciliatory and repressive regimes”, it highlights that there are different mechanisms and dynamics depending on the context and aim of a campaign (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 7-10, 221). This matters not only for the planning of future campaigns, but also for statistical research on the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 7-10). Therefore, the treatment of civil resistance campaigns as “a stable set of practices” and “a single and unified category of action” which can be “compared over time, and between politico-cultural contexts” is an oversimplification of the phenomenon (Sommer et al., 2019, 221).

An example of the importance of context to understanding nonviolent resistance can be found in the book *Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles* (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 343) and the discussion on the specific context of independence struggles and resistance against foreign rule and occupation in nonviolence studies. In the discussion, several differences between this form of struggle and resistance against a domestic authoritarian ruler are brought up as central to understanding the dynamics of this type of nonviolent resistance (Bartkowski ed, 2013,

343). The example demonstrates that even “core” nonviolent tactics do not necessarily travel across contexts to work in all cases.

The focus on arguments around nonviolent campaigns within highly repressive settings is an engagement with the “common misconception” that nonviolent resistance is exclusively or more often successful in liberal democracies, which Chenoweth and Stephan state is not supported by “the empirical record” (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 19). Kurt Schock (2003, 706) writes that looking at the data, nonviolent resistance has been “effective in brutally repressive contexts” and “ineffective in open democratic societies”. This particular argument has become important to nonviolence literature, since the objection that nonviolent resistance was no match to dictators and authoritarianism became a main argument against nonviolence and pacifism during the Cold War (Baldoli, 2019, 5; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 221). In response to this, Galtung and Sharp amongst others examined nonviolent resistance to Nazism during the Second World War (Baldoli, 2019, 5; Carter, 2009, 29; Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 5).

However, challenges were also made to the idea of “extra-constitutional” (Sharp, 1959, 45) nonviolent action within democracies. With these arguments, a discussion around the legitimacy of civil disobedience in democracies “entered the mainstream of political theory in the 1960s and 1970s”, following from discussions on this during the civil rights and peace campaigns in liberal states (Carter, 2009, 29). Stiehm (1968, 26) comments on this by writing that nonviolent political campaigns will see themselves as “part of the democratic process” because the victory “will usually go to the side with the largest number of supporters; thus, the majority rules”.

Principled and strategic nonviolence

A main dividing line within nonviolence theory and practice is that between principled nonviolence, or pacifism, and strategic nonviolence. The following section will discuss this division, briefly outline the two perspectives, introduce perspectives which argue for a united meaning of nonviolence, and then explain why this thesis discusses both strategic and principled nonviolence without too much attention on the dividing line between them.

The division was first articulated by theorists in the 1960s including Gene Sharp, Johan Galtung, and Judith Stiehm (Baldoli, 2019, 5-6; Satha-Anand, 2015, 297; Stiehm, 1968, 23). The division created by Sharp and Galtung, and especially the popularity of Sharp’s works on strategic

nonviolence, are “at the basis of the recent success of the concept of nonviolence” (Baldoli, 2019, 5-6). However, more recent defences of the importance of a principled commitment to nonviolence have emerged, as have arguments that the separation between the two is not practically possible or recommendable. This section will discuss first the history and main arguments of principled nonviolence; then do the same about strategic nonviolence; summarise the main differences described between the two strands within various theories of nonviolence; and finally discuss theories and arguments for combining the two strands into one conception of nonviolence.

Principled nonviolence/pacifism

Principled nonviolence, or pacifism, is a much older tradition than strategic nonviolence, with roots in religious and moral traditions (Cortright, 2008, 2-3, 8; Isserman, 1986, 47). Within Christianity, a famous example of a pacifist group is that of the Quakers, or Society of Friends (Friends Publishing Corporation, 2020). Along with these religious connotations, pacifism is also presented as a moral theory and argument (for example Farmer, 2011, who frames pacifism as humanism), which is once again a significant difference to purely strategic visions of nonviolence.

Stiehm (1968, 23) defines “conscientious” nonviolence, or pacifism, as “a religious or ethical belief which categorically prohibits injury of other”, while Sharp (1959, 44) defines that pacifism “as a minimum” is against “participation in all international or civil wars or violent revolutions”. These two definitions depict the spectrum of different versions of pacifism well.

Perhaps the most extreme, or restrictive, form of pacifism, the doctrine of “non-resistance”, is closely related to certain branches of Christianity. Non-resistance is a principle which rejects using physical violence or force, even for self-defence, and emphasises the virtue of enduring suffering, as well as staying outside perceived evil or violent situations and systems rather than engaging to work against the violence (Cortright, 2008, 8; Sharp, 1959, 46-47). This version of pacifism is then an obvious example of a purist conception of nonviolence, where the aim is to avoid implication in violence at all cost, even the cost of not attempting to work against violence (see for example Farmer, 2011, 42 for an example of the absurdity of this argument within an ideology that is against violence). Non-resistance, or passivity, is also the version of pacifism most often referred to in critiques of pacifism, which tend to argue that it is an unrealistic ideology, and a version of pacifism which is increasingly moved away from in pacifist literature and arguments (Benjamin, 1973, 196-197; Farmer, 2011, 43-44).

Other versions of pacifism may allow for self-defence and resistance, but argue against the use of coercion as a method to get an opponent to change their behaviour, and may even object to the idea that there is an “opponent” as such, rather than a lack of clear communication between different actors with ultimately compatible interests (Stiehm, 1968, 25). This focus on “conversion” over coercion is an often highlighted difference between principled and strategic nonviolence. Conversion entails reforming the opposing side’s character, or changing their mind, through a belief in the good in every person, and often an appeal to their conscience through self-sacrificial actions (Isserman, 1986, 47; Stiehm, 1968, 24-25). Another example of a purist approach to nonviolence within this version of pacifism can be found in nonviolent liberation activist Bill Sutherland’s account of interactions with American pacifist movements over the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 153). Bill Sutherland explains that:

One issue that came up during my time with AFSC [American Friends Service Committee] was the concern by some on the AFSC’s Board that I was making use of the organization to support armed struggle. It seemed that if I said it looks like violence is inevitable in a particular situation in South Africa, I would be accused of advocating violence ... There was an influential and affluent group with the AFSC with the conscious or unconscious feeling that they could maintain the status quo in South Africa and give it a human face, or make it less violent. It was my conviction that the people must overthrow a system based on greed and racism ... I identify with any people’s struggle to get a boot off their necks and it’s up to them to decide their methods. I couldn’t tell the ANC [African National Congress] or PAC [Pan Africanist Congress] to wait until my nonviolent experiment works (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 153).

In this way, a commitment to pacifism or nonviolence was seen by the AFSC to mean putting off fighting injustice if the alternative was to fight with violent means, a clearly purist conception of nonviolent political work.

Another common version of pacifism is the anti-war movement, which rather than targeting all violence, targets international warfare, and at times even more narrowly nuclear weapons and warfare (Benjamin, 1973, 197-199; Cortright, 2008, 3-6; Isserman, 1986, 47-49). The anti-war movement has a rich history, and has, evidently, been strongly impacted by world events, such as

the two world wars (Isserman, 1986, 48). For example, the Second World War and its aftermath was challenging for the pacifist movement because the term - especially in the U.S. - came to be associated with support for the Soviet Union, and through that a pacifist would risk being branded a “potential traitor” (*ibid*). Thus, the apolitical character that had appealed to pacifists after the First World War - an idea which is still held with regards to both pacifism and strategic nonviolence (Baldoli, 2019, 7; Benjamin, 1973, 211; Richards, 1991, 60; Weber, 2003, 260) - was temporarily undermined by political developments which forced the peace movement to think about political positions. Although the position of “peace above all else” was then challenged at the time, pacifist arguments have since held on to this position, arguing that avoiding widespread death or destruction (as nuclear warfare especially would create) has to come before other political struggles or causes (Benjamin, 1973, 211). This sense of a hierarchy of causes - or forms of violence to be fought – is revisited at different points in this thesis.

More recently, a branch of so-called “pragmatic” pacifism has been articulated, which is closely aligned with just war theory (Farmer, 2011, 46; Cortright, 2008, 14-16). This has been, in part, in response to the rising popularity of both strategic nonviolence, but especially arguments that pacifism as it is commonly understood (a rejection of all violence, and a purist, passive approach) is simply unrealistic and naive. Pragmatic, or conditional, pacifism, then goes against the absolute rejection of physical violence and warfare, and in its place suggests a pacifism which “oppose[s] war in principle but accept[s] the possibility of using force for self-defense or the protection of the vulnerable” (Cortright, 2008, 8). What unites the relatively wide range of positions that fall under this definition is a constant presumption “against the use of force and in favor of settling differences without violence” (*ibid*, 14-15). Another strategy for making pacifism “pragmatic” is to focus on arguments that demonstrate that violence may not be likely to achieve desired ends, especially in the cases of state militarism and nuclear weapons (Benjamin, 1973, 196-199), an approach which is very close, if not similar, to strategic nonviolence arguments.

Strategic nonviolence

As mentioned, strategic nonviolence is a newer strand of nonviolence than pacifism, and was first articulated in the 1950s and 1960s by theorists such as Gene Sharp, Johan Galtung, Richard Gregg, and the less well-known Judith Stiehm. Unlike pacifism, which views conflict as a failure of communication, and potentially avoidable, strategic nonviolence is centred around an acceptance

of political conflict “viewed as a relationship between antagonists with incompatible interests”, and with a goal to “defeat the opponent” (Weber, 2003, 258; Stiehm, 1968, 25). Unlike other areas of conflict studies, however, the focus is on defeating the opponent without the use of direct violence, and unlike pacifism, the nonviolent actor is most often a group or social movement rather than an individual (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 64; Stiehm, 1968, 24, 26).

Strategic nonviolence, that is, using nonviolent resistance methods without a moral or religious commitment to avoiding violence, is today widely seen as the most prominent form of nonviolence, and the attitude most often found in nonviolent resistance campaigns and movements (Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013, 273; Satha-Anand, 2015, 290). Although the field of nonviolence theory is rapidly growing, the work of Sharp in particular is still widely used by both academics and activists across the world, and especially the 1973 book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* remains a seminal work in the field of nonviolence literature, activist training, and knowledge formation (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 225; Nepstad, 2015, 123; Walters, 2018; Weber, 2003, 251).

Described as the “preeminent theorist” of strategic nonviolence (Weber, 2003, 250), Sharp’s work is at the centre of strategic nonviolence as a field, and most writings on strategic nonviolence will refer back to Sharp at some point. Sharp embraced a military-style approach to nonviolent strategy, to function as an alternative “weapons system” (Carter, 2009, 31; Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 67, 110-112; Weber, 2003, 258). Following in this line of thinking about nonviolence, research on nonviolent struggle today aims to achieve higher recognition of this form of conflict within traditionally influential academic fields such as security and conflict studies, and tries to achieve this precisely by emphasising strategic rather than moral arguments for the use of nonviolent tactics and “conceptualizing civil resistance as a form of unconventional warfare” (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 16-18; Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013, 272). This growing link is further strengthened by “a number of former military officers who have engaged with non-violent resistance” and acted at times as advisers for nonviolent campaigns (Carter, 2009, 38). Like Richard Gregg, Sharp was initially a student and follower of Gandhi, and both authors aimed to produce more systematic and scientific accounts of nonviolence based on Gandhi’s actions and teachings - as opposed to Gandhi’s own writings which were often unclear and confusing (Kosek, 2005, 1320-1324; Weber, 2003, 250-256). In later works, however, Sharp moved fully away from any principled commitment to nonviolence

and what he saw as naive pacifist proposals for alternatives to armed struggle (and with that away from Gandhi as an inspiration for nonviolence), and aimed to describe only the techniques of nonviolence (Weber, 2003, 254-257).

The main claim of strategic nonviolence is, then, that nonviolent campaigns are as effective, or more effective, than violent insurgencies, and that this is because of nonviolent coercion and leverage rather than trying to change the mind of the opponent through morally superior actions and sacrifice (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 19, 221; Martin, 2015, 149; Stiehm, 1968, 26). Although the argument is strategic here, it is nevertheless important to note that a certain degree of purity politics, as described by Shotwell (2016) is still seen, in that authors will argue against claims that violent resistance may at times be necessary or strategically prudent (e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 227). Chenoweth and Stephan (*ibid*, 43) further argue that claims that violent flanks, or threats of a campaign turning violent, can be a strategic advantage and increase the leverage of a nonviolent campaign, are incorrect - or in other words, the authors claim that violent and nonviolent campaigns cannot exist symbiotically, but that a purely nonviolent campaign is mostly strategically superior. Another seminal work in the field of nonviolence literature is the 2011 book *Why Civil Resistance Works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict* by Erika Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, which consists of a thorough statistical study of the relative effectiveness of violent and nonviolent campaigns, further developed with the updated datasets NAVCO 2.0 and NAVCO 3.0 (Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013; Chenoweth, Pinckney, and Lewis, 2018). The NAVCO data set examines 323 violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns from 1900 to 2006, and shows that nonviolent campaigns are increasing in frequency, as well as in success rate (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 6, 17). In contrast, violent struggles have seen a decline in success, and were almost half as likely to succeed or partially succeed as nonviolent campaigns (*ibid*, 7). In addition, *Why Civil Resistance Works* (*ibid*, 11) supports the statistics of the NAVCO dataset with qualitative material from case studies, which explore the dynamics of how nonviolent resistance works as described later in this chapter.

Although the strategic approach to nonviolence has been hugely successful, the approach also meets criticism. A major critique is the argument that by removing values, morals, and ideology, there is a risk that strategic nonviolence can be used by oppressive groups or leaders to gain leverage and power, or can in fact lead to more harm to others than what is commonly

acknowledged in the theory (for example Baldoli, 2019, 7; Richards, 1991, 60; Weber, 2003, 260). Others such as Burrowes critique that besides the risk of harmful consequences, the removal of what they see as the “core” of nonviolence, which is the “idea of the sanctity of life”, also removes the opportunity to “radically transform human relationships”, which is what makes nonviolence “unique as a method of political action” (quoted in Weber, 2003, 262). Perhaps in response to this, arguments for combining the two strands of nonviolence are made.

Intersections

Before discussing whether the two strands of nonviolence can in fact be meaningfully combined in one concept of nonviolence, it is useful to summarise the main differences often highlighted between strategic and principled nonviolence.

First, and somewhat obviously, the two strands are different in their reasons for not using violence. Where principled nonviolence makes an ethical or religious objection to the use of violence as such, strategic nonviolence argues that nonviolent resistance is more effective, and more likely to achieve the goals aimed for.

Second, the core mechanism for changing the behaviour of the opponent is described as that of conversion or coercion respectively. That is, while principled nonviolence aims to convert the opponent, strategic nonviolence entails tactics to increase leverage, and thereby coerce the opponent into changing their behaviour (e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 42-46).

Third, as Stiehm (1968, 24-25) especially points out, principled nonviolence is highly individualistic, and describes behaviours which an individual should practice at all times. In contrast, strategic nonviolence is usually carried out by groups, and this means new questions for nonviolence theory and organising, such as “recruiting and selecting leaders and members ... [and] problems of responsibility and of morale maintenance” (*ibid*, 26). Further, the collective nature of strategic nonviolence means that understanding this form of action becomes not only a question for psychology (as pacifism is also), but also sociology (*ibid*, 28).

Fourth, the assumptions about the occurrence and value of conflict in society are different between the two strands of nonviolence. Strategic nonviolence is explicitly based on the acceptance of conflict and aims to change how conflict is dealt with. Pacifism, on the other hand, is at its root against conflict, and “assumes that social conflict represents no more than a failure of communication between individuals and their consciences” (Stiehm, 1968, 24).

These significant differences, as well as the many discussions of this definitional division and the “widespread acceptance of it” does, as Baldoli (2019, 13) also argues, suggest that the division “does actually contain something important”.

Across the two branches of nonviolence, a different spectrum of conceptions can be observed, with regards to how wide-reaching the focus on violence is. That is, how broadly is violence conceptualised, and what occurrences of violence are seen as “mattering” to the nonviolence theory? In pacifism, this spectrum was described with non-resistance theories at the one end (in which violence should be avoided in all situations), and pacifism as specifically anti-nuclear activism at the other (in which a highly specific form of violence is fought). This question, or spectrum, is part of the foundation of many of the questions that make up the second part of this thesis on different impacts of violence on nonviolent resistance.

As mentioned, critiques have been articulated recently of the strict division between strategic and principled nonviolence, and the division between different nonviolent groups and movements instead of cooperation which has sometimes followed from this separation (e.g. Baldoli, 2019, 6; Satha-Anand, 2015, 290). Baldoli (2019, 7-8) for example attempts to create a “reconstructed” concept of nonviolence, which is “neither a principle nor a technique of action”, but rather “two schools belonging to the same praxis, which reinterprets and shapes current practices in society, as well as introduce new ones”.

However, the recognition that the two distinct forms of nonviolence are perhaps not so strictly separate is not all new. Stiehm (1968, 24, 28) even notes, in an article with the main purpose of understanding the differences between the two approaches, that they are still similar in a number of ways, such as “their disavowal of violence, in many of their choices of action techniques, in their capacity to inspire martyrdom, in their goals chosen for action, and in their rhetoric” and that the relationship between the two is not antagonistic, but symbiotic. Even Sharp’s writings, suggest some overlapping of the two approaches (Satha-Anand, 2015, 295). Satha-Anand (*ibid*, 297) argues that “Sharp’s nonviolence has some of the qualities of someone who practices nonviolence as a way of life, especially in its strong and strict commitment to use *only* nonviolent methods, not to harm others, and to try not to hate the opponents”. The purist attitude that nonviolence is only characterised as such by a complete denial of using direct violence, rather than a preference for nonviolent methods while actively fighting violence, is then shared by strategic and principled

nonviolence. Satha-Anand (*ibid*, 298), again, confirms the importance of the purity of nonviolent methods, writing that “[p]ragmatic nonviolent strategists cannot claim to be nonviolent or work effectively for nonviolent social change if the language of nonviolence is not consistently used, or if they do not commit to the use of nonviolent action without reservation”.

Further, a significant number of organisers and leaders hailed as central to the history and canon of nonviolence represent a combination of the two forms of nonviolence, and that the two forms of nonviolence “*do* live together” in practices and discussions of nonviolence (Stiehm, 1968, 28). Benjamin (1973, 197), for example, talks of the names “closely connected” with pacifism such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., both of which are also studied extensively within strategic nonviolence literature (e.g. Satha-Anand, 2015, 298; Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, e.g. 5, 82, 111). Gandhi is especially often mentioned as an inspiration for both strands of nonviolence, given that his concept of *satyagraha* was “both a strategy for nonviolent direct action by a mass movement and an ethical system for the individual” (Isserman, 1986, 48). The next chapter on the history of nonviolent resistance will further demonstrate this argument.

Finally, within the context of this thesis, the two strands of nonviolence are both being referred to without distinction when the project talks of ‘nonviolent resistance’ or other terms with the same meaning. This is in part in reference to the arguments about this combination discussed above, but in particular it is because the questions and arguments raised in this thesis are relevant to both of these areas - although strategic nonviolence literature is used more than pacifist literature. This focus is because of the prominence of strategic nonviolence, especially within social movements and nonviolent campaigns, as discussed earlier. However, both strands of nonviolence share the issue that the role of violence in these movements and movement dynamics is insufficiently discussed, defined, and reckoned with, in part because of a purity politics approach to nonviolence within both strands. As such, the distinction between the two strands is not one that needs specific acknowledgement for later parts of the thesis, although it is as shown here an important distinction to understand in order to comprehend the conceptualisation of nonviolent resistance in the literature.

Definitional strategies

It is probably then already clear that nonviolent resistance is a difficult concept to define precisely.

Sharp (1959, 41) amongst others, talks of the “widespread confusion” over the meaning of the term, and Stiehm (1968, 23) argues that the term, “like all general terms, suffers from the fact that it encompasses a wide variety of actions ... as well as a number of philosophical positions”. While it is then generally accepted within the field both that the concept is difficult to define, and that it needs some form of definition in order to be discussed and analysed, the approach to this task varies greatly. The following section will outline some major approaches to the task - or definitional strategies - as well as the definitions or conceptualisations of nonviolence that follow from these strategies. While some authors provide a clearly marked “working definition” as a sufficient starting point, others use definitional strategies such as listing possible tactics; categorising forms of nonviolence; or defining nonviolence in relation to the concept of violence. More recently, a more conceptual approach to nonviolence studies, in which the concept of nonviolence as such is examined in detail, can be seen within the field. It is only with this recent increase in focus on the concept of nonviolence as such that an interest in thoroughly examining the definitional line(s) between violence and nonviolence has also arisen. While Sharp (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 64-65) argues - echoing Gandhi - that the issue of defining violence and nonviolence is not the important distinction for the purposes of understanding nonviolent action, but rather the distinction between action and inaction is, it should be clear that this thesis disagrees with that. Although the aim here is not to establish clear and universal definitions of violence and nonviolence, or the line(s) between them, the thesis aims to demonstrate that these questions are still fundamentally important, and have a strong impact on the practical work of nonviolent action.

Negative definition

The most immediate approach to defining nonviolence is to define it negatively with reference to violence, that is, nonviolence as simply meaning ‘not violence’ or ‘without violence’. An example of this is provided by Brian Martin (2015, 147) who defines nonviolence as “social action that does not involve physical violence”, without however discussing what “violence” then is, or what the specification of “physical” violence indicates. This definition is based on a premise that the concept of violence is well understood and agreed on, and therefore usable as a common reference point for definitions of related concepts. Gene Sharp (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 64) makes use of a similar negative definition of nonviolence, and also, as Martin, mentions specifically the refusal to use “physical” violence without discussing what that is, or the idea of non-physical violence.

However, Sharp (1959, 41) argues in an earlier piece of writing that although it may seem as though “not violence” is a coherent concept, it would be a mistake to fail “to discern the very real differences among the various types of ‘non-violence’”, making classification of different kinds of nonviolence an important task.

Baldoli (2019, 2), who is part of a recent interest in a more conceptual analysis of the term nonviolence, critiques this strategy and argues that it stems in part from the “dominion” of the concept of violence, which has until recently not had an opposite concept at all. However, viewing nonviolence as the opposite to violence becomes problematic also because “[v]iolence is an extremely vague word” and this means “that finding its exact opposite is an act of desperation” (*ibid*). Arguably, the same can be said for defining nonviolence, if not as the opposite of violence, then the exclusion or lack of violence, which is still a definition which depends for its clarity on the clarity of the concept of violence. As an alternative, Baldoli (*ibid*, 8-9) argues that constructing from scratch a concept of nonviolence independently of that of violence allows for a more accurate and precise definition.

Working definition

While the writings of Stellan Vinthagen represent part of the emerging conceptual approach mentioned above, Vinthagen does, in fact, argue in favour of the value of working definitions, writing that definitions should be seen as “tools” rather than attempts to agree on one “correct” definition (Vinthagen, 2015, 69). With this argument, Vinthagen describes nonviolence as a wide field of different forms of nonviolence, organised in a framework of “minimal” to “maximal” meanings of nonviolence (*ibid*, 68-69). He further argues that any examination of nonviolence will look only at certain forms or types of nonviolence, and the purpose of a definition is exactly to make it clear which form of nonviolence is being examined, rather than define the object of examination as the *only* form of nonviolence (*ibid*). The working definition of nonviolence is therefore one that aims only to clarify the object of a specific study, research, or in more practical terms, movement or campaign, and through that add to a larger, not quite defined, concept of nonviolence.

In *A Theory of Nonviolent Action: How civil resistance works*, Vinthagen does then provide the working definition for the book that with “nonviolence”:

I include only those movements that view ‘we’ as at least both *their own group and other*

parties acting in a conflict ('the enemy', 'opponents', 'third parties' and so on), define 'violence' as at least the causing of *permanent physical injury*, and consider nonviolence to at least *partially combine without violence and against violence* (Vinthagen, 2015, 69).

and clarifies in relation to other nonviolence literature that "my purpose is to investigate a kind of 'nonviolence' that is more ambitious than the conventional type". While this is a clear example of the idea of a working definition as simply a tool to provide clarity for the discussion at hand, it also illustrates the fact that even discussions that seemingly accept the lack of a clear overall definition of the concept of nonviolence do, to some extent, rely on an assumption that such clarity exists, and that the reader is familiar with it. By referring to the "conventional type" of nonviolence, Vinthagen is invoking an image and an understanding of a vague and undefined entity as though it is in fact clear and carries a similar meaning to different readers.

Another example of the use of working definitions, that is, the acknowledgement when discussing the definition of nonviolence that a final or complete definition is not being provided, is seen in Chenoweth and Stephan's 2011 book *Why Civil Resistance Works: The strategic logic of nonviolent conflict*. In the book, the authors discuss firstly the distinction between violent and nonviolent campaigns, acknowledging the "difficulties with labeling one campaign as violent and another as nonviolent" (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 12). While the line between violence and nonviolence is then seemingly discussed here, it is not the concepts of violence and nonviolence as such, or the often blurry lines separating them, but rather, how *much* undefined violence is considered below the threshold of what makes a campaign violent. In a later article, Chenoweth and Cunningham (2013, 273) also recognise this difficulty of distinguishing between violence and nonviolence, but treat this as a "practical" difficulty rather than an important and fundamental discussion of the core of the meaning of nonviolence. Following this approach, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 12) then write that it is "possible to characterize a campaign as principally nonviolent based on the primacy of nonviolent resistance methods and the nature of the participation in that form of resistance". In other words, if the tactics used in a campaign are primarily nonviolent - whatever that may mean - then the campaign is classed by the authors as a nonviolent campaign. Campaigns in which "a significant amount of violence occurred", are categorised as violent campaigns (*ibid*, 12-13). A similar approach is taken by Sutherland and Meyer (2000, 152) when classifying the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa as nonviolent, arguing both that nonviolent

tactics were the most used, and that “[t]hough eventually and occasionally some rocks and bottles may have been thrown, this type of activity - stones thrown against tanks that are leveling communities - is much closer to the Palestinian Intifada, also predominantly nonviolent, than to a real armed confrontation”.

Listing tactics

A common way of illustrating or conceptualising what is meant by the vague term of nonviolent resistance is that of listing examples of different, often very common, nonviolent tactics. Arguably, the premise of one of the most famous works on nonviolent action, Gene Sharp’s 1973 book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, is this definitional strategy. In the book, Sharp presents and discusses 198 nonviolent tactics (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 119-433). The definitional strategy of listing different forms of nonviolent action is seen in several other prominent works in the field, such as Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 12), Bartkowski (ed, 2013, 4), Chenoweth and Cunningham (2013, 271), and Martin (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018, xiv). Stiehm (1968, 23) builds on the strategy of listing tactics to conceptualise nonviolence, and describes a spectrum of nonviolent actions, “from self-immolation to a carefully conceived consumer boycott”, and of nonviolent schools of thought, “from that of the Friends to that of CORE activists”. An added dimension of the list strategy can be to list violent tactics as well, as a way of describing what nonviolent resistance is not. Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 12-13) provide an example of this, writing that “[v]iolent tactics include bombings, shootings, kidnappings, physical sabotage such as the destruction of infrastructure, and other types of physical harm of people and property”.

What is not made clear when using a list of nonviolent tactics to suggest an understanding of nonviolence as such is whether the list is exhaustive, or merely listing the most important nonviolent tactics, or even random tactics in no particular order, and, perhaps most importantly, how the examples listed are chosen and defined as being nonviolent resistance. This definitional strategy seems to fit well with the methodology of nonviolence literature, in that it is based on observation of actual protests and campaigns, and from those creates a vocabulary and classification system of nonviolent tactics, rather than looking for examples of theoretical types of political action in practical politics.

Categorisation

From these lists of nonviolent tactics, when building an understanding of nonviolence as such, some authors go a step further and divide the nonviolent tactics into larger blocks, or categories of nonviolent action. Gene Sharp is again a famous example of this. In Sharp's work on nonviolent resistance, three main categories of nonviolent tactics are described, and the act of classifying different forms of nonviolence is described as crucial to a "scientific" analysis of nonviolent resistance (Sharp, 1959, 41). Sharp describes these as:

methods of resistance and direct action without physical violence in which the members of the nonviolent group commit either (1) *acts of omission* – that is, they refuse to perform acts which they usually perform and are expected by custom to perform or are required by law or regulation to perform – or (2) *acts of commission* – that is, they insist on performing acts which they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden by law or regulation from performing – or (3) *both* (Sharp, 1959, 44-45).

In *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973), Sharp groups the 198 different methods into six categories: 1) Protest and Persuasion (pp. 117-182); 2) Social Noncooperation (pp. 183-218); 3) Economic Noncooperation (Boycotts) (pp. 219-256); 4) Economic Noncooperation (Strikes) (pp. 257-284); 5) Political Noncooperation (pp. 285-356); and 6) Nonviolent Intervention (pp. 357-448). In a further categorisation process, the book introduces six stages of the "dynamics of nonviolent action" (Martin, 2015, 150). These are: "laying the groundwork, challenge that leads to repression, maintaining solidarity and nonviolent discipline, political jiu-jitsu, three modes of success, and the redistribution of power" (*ibid*). Martin (*ibid*, 162) writes that although the final stage of the dynamics, "redistribution of power" is "crucially important for the success of campaigns", it is much less articulated in Sharp's theory than the other stages. This leads for example to campaigns which have effectively overthrown a leader or government, but failed to implement structural change, making the change more "symbolic than substantive" (*ibid*).

In another example of categorisation as a strategy to describe or define nonviolence as such, Bartkowski (ed, 2013, 15-19) distinguish between direct and indirect nonviolent struggles. They see indirect struggle as what is also at times referred to as "everyday forms of resistance", or "existence is resistance", i.e. forms of resistance that simply include still living on certain land, maintaining

language and culture despite oppression, and so on (*ibid*, 16-17). In contrast, direct resistance is described as more “forceful actions in order to put more overt pressure on the authorities. These more confrontational engagements often [involve] ever-growing participation of wider swathes of the society who directly and immediately [challenge] the authorities and their control over land and population” (*ibid*, 19). These two forms of resistance are often both employed by resistance movements (*ibid*).

Similarly, Vinthagen (2015, 63) defines the two categories of “nonviolent construction” and “nonviolent resistance” and uses these categories to define nonviolence as such as the sum of these two categories. In addition, each of these have their own sub-categories (*ibid*, 71-74). Vinthagen’s conception of nonviolence is one that is inherently multidimensional, and therefore, the approach emphasises the importance of using a range of tactics not only to be less predictable for the opponent, but also to address violence in its different dimensions and roles (*ibid*, 64-66). Despite then describing these two sides of nonviolence as integrally linked, Vinthagen also states that this conception of nonviolence is “intrinsically strained” and has “two convergent meanings, the consequences and common significance of which cannot be fully realised”, which leads to movements usually stressing one aspect over the other (*ibid*, 67). This, perhaps, suggests that although a wide range of tactics is a strength of nonviolent movements, it can also lead to tension and contradictions within these movements that are not often explored in the theory and literature on nonviolence.

Baldoli (2019, 13), who is discussed in the next section on the more conceptual analysis of nonviolence, critiques categorisation as a strategy for conceptualising or defining nonviolence, arguing that “it is doubtful that a new categorisation would help the research on nonviolence. It would only make the literature more chaotic”.

Emerging conceptual approach

Although writers such as Sharp (1959, 41) and Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 12) do then recognise difficulties both with defining nonviolent resistance as such, and distinguishing violent and nonviolent resistance, this is, as shown, seen as being more of an issue with the overlapping of tactics or difficulty of quantifying and measuring nonviolent methods; i.e. a practical issue, rather than one concerned with the importance and difficulty of defining the concept of nonviolence as such in a clear and consistent manner. As discussed, this problem is often dealt with through some

idea of a working definition rather than a final one, although the working definitions still often end up referring to vague concepts as though they have a clear and universal meaning.

However, a number of works on nonviolence are starting to appear which do seek to provide a more conceptual and in-depth analysis of what nonviolence as such is, what its relationship to the concept of violence is, and how these questions shape the actual 'doing' of nonviolent resistance.

Vinthagen's book *A Theory of Nonviolent Action: How civil resistance works* (2015) provides an expansive discussion and conceptualisation of both nonviolence and violence. The focus on the concept of violence is in part because Vinthagen (2015, 66) defines nonviolence as being not simply not using violence, but also working against violence, while at the same time recognising that nonviolence is not fully free from violence. Vinthagen argues that this is especially the case "if resistance is to mean resistance against 'violence' and not just against the violence of others" (*ibid*, 67), a claim which is particularly relevant in the context of later chapters of this thesis. This definition of being both without and against violence is one which bridges a central dividing line within the field of nonviolence literature, that between strategic and principled nonviolence. While much of the literature discussed so far falls within the strategic nonviolence field (being about resistance movements that refrain from using violence), being against violence is the core of the classic and most influential version of principled nonviolence, pacifism.

Another recent attempt at defining or discussing the concept of nonviolence as such is Roberto Baldoli's 2019 book *Reconstructing Nonviolence: A New Theory and Practice for a Post-Secular Society*. In it, Baldoli (2019, 6) argues that because nonviolence literature has not worked with an overarching conception of nonviolence, nonviolence has instead become "a sub-field in many areas of study". To remedy this, and unify the field of nonviolence as an independent, "reunited and thus progressive" area of research and political action, Baldoli (*ibid*, 6-7) aims to "reunite" nonviolence by creating a new, "pluralistic" conception, "both analytical and normative, which is able to include the variety of manifestations of nonviolence, while at the same time providing a direction and new practices in a different historical environment". Baldoli (*ibid*) does explicitly criticise a more observation-based approach to defining and understanding nonviolence, writing that there is a risk that an observation-based theory fails to be open to new forms of nonviolence, to "fall into a regressive field of research, in which there is no actual understanding of a changing reality and the construction of a new project". In other words, defining nonviolent action

by the nonviolent actions that have already happened and been observed risks that the field of nonviolence studies is limited in its understanding of nonviolence, rather than exploring new or alternative manifestations of the concept.

In his book, Vinthagen (2015, 69) provides an examination of the concepts of violence and nonviolence, while also making an argument for the value of adopting working definitions, and allowing different definitions and manifestations of nonviolence to add up to create the overall field of nonviolence. In contrast, Baldoli (2019, 6) is explicitly critical of this strategy of “fragmentation” when constructing an idea of what nonviolence means. Baldoli (*ibid*) writes that this is a problem because fragmentation “creates a degenerative, regressive, and repressive field of research” in which opportunities may be created for “worrying uses of the term, such as ‘nonviolent crimes’, ‘nonviolent extremism’, ‘nonviolent terrorism’ or ‘nonviolent fundamentalism’”. Rather, the aim of a theory of nonviolence should be to “find a unique and more progressive conception, which is able to explain actual discrepancies with a core unifying interpretation, framework, platform; to include existing uses of the term as corollaries, as contextualised instances of that concept; and to foster new uses and research” (*ibid*).

Another recent work on nonviolence which takes a more conceptual and theoretical approach is the work of Judith Butler. Starting from arguments around the unequal distribution of “grievability” (Butler, 2004, 19-50) attributed to human life in their 2004 work *Precarious Life*, and arguments about the inseparability of violence and nonviolence in public lectures (Butler, 2016) and their 2010 book *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (Schneider, 2011), Butler published *The Force of Non-Violence: An Ethico-Political Bind* in 2020. In *The Force of Non-Violence*, Butler places the violence-nonviolence definitional relationship within a framework of dispute and interpretation (Butler, 2020, 1-5). Butler (*ibid*, 5) also points to another impact that definitions of violence have on nonviolence resistance, by discussing the instrumentality of violence definitions, writing about:

a political situation where the power to attribute violence to the opposition itself becomes an instrument to enhance state power, to discredit the aims of the opposition, or even to justify their radical disenfranchisement, imprisonment, and murder (Butler, 2020, 5).

In this way, Butler also demonstrates why articulations of the violence/nonviolence definitional boundary are not politically neutral, a line of argument which is inherent to a number

of the discussions and themes in this thesis as well. This leaves the task of defining nonviolence as inherently political, because:

To argue for or against nonviolence requires that we establish the difference between violence and nonviolence, if we can. But there is no quick way to arrive at a stable semantic distinction between the two when that distinction is so often exploited for the purposes of concealing and extending violent aims and practices (Butler, 2020, 6).

The overriding aim in *The Force of Non-Violence* is to formulate a normative claim for nonviolence which is not, as other principled nonviolence arguments are, based on individual conscience or conviction, but precisely on the rejection of individualism and a suggestion instead to base the concept of nonviolence on the social bonds between people (Butler, 2020, 15). Butler (*ibid*, 9, 15) formulates an ethics of nonviolence which instead of focusing on “individual morality” seeks to “take the lead in waging a critique of individualism as the basis of ethics and politics alike” and define “a social philosophy of living and sustainable bonds”. This can be described in a number of ways as a rejection of purist conceptions of nonviolence, most notably in its direct rejection of individualism – a central part of purity politics (Shotwell, 2016, 8-9) – but also because a focus on “bonds” between people must entail not only the well-intentioned bonds of care and love, but also bonds of exploitation, dependence, hierarchies, and so on. This leads to a definition of nonviolence not as a:

moral position adopted by individuals in relation to a field of possible action [but] as a social and political practice undertaken in concert, culminating in a form of resistance to systemic forms of destruction coupled with a commitment to world building that honors global interdependency of the kind that embodies ideals of economic, social and political freedom and equality (Butler, 2020, 20-21).

In a further move away from purist ideas of nonviolence, Butler (2020, 22-23) argues in the book that “nonviolence is an ideal that cannot always be fully honored in the practice” and that “there is no practice of nonviolence that does not negotiate fundamental ethical and political ambiguities, which means that ‘nonviolence’ is not an absolute principle, but the name of an ongoing struggle”.

Closing remarks

The section discussing definitional strategies provides an overview of different ways that theorists have tried to get around the difficulty of defining the concept of nonviolence. The aim has not been to argue that nonviolent resistance is, in fact, easily definable, and that the literature fails by not doing so. It is rather an argument that this difficulty of definition - and the various methods employed to still conceptualise, or define, nonviolence - is an important part of understanding the field of nonviolence literature, as well as the practice of nonviolence. In keeping with the anti-naturalist approach of this project's conceptualisation of nonviolence, it is also an argument that this "empirical diversity" is not "an obstacle to concept formation, but on the contrary, a fundamental aspect of social reality" (Bevir and Kedar, 2008, 508) which creates a task for nonviolence theory of reflecting this diversity rather than attempting to overcome it with an all-encompassing definition. The vague definitions and the blurry line(s) between violence and nonviolence are an important part of nonviolence as such. Another argument in this literature review is that even when definitions are acknowledged to be limited working definitions, they often operate with an assumption of some common reference point which is understood by readers, whether that is the concept of nonviolence, or that of violence. The assumption that this reference point is universally agreed on and understood, even if impossible to put into so many words, is not realistic - and in the case of the concept of violence, this will be further illustrated in Chapter Four. Hence, this unclarity, this lack of agreement or a clear definition, is important in some sense, and has real impact on both the study and practice of nonviolence. That ambiguity, and the result of either acknowledging and discussing this, or ignoring it, is the overall theme of this thesis. The argument is that it is important to pay attention to the ambiguity, and to whether and how discussions of this take place.

How and why nonviolence works

While the previous section on definitions and conceptualisations of nonviolence has introduced - to some extent - what nonviolence *is*, an important part of understanding nonviolent resistance, and the literature about it, is to understand *how* nonviolence works, and *why* it works well. Already in 1968, Stiehm (1968, 26) posed questions about this, arguing that since strategic nonviolence "bases its claim to support on its effectiveness in producing results at least the equivalent of those which

would have been produced by the use of violence, it has the responsibility of proving its claim". This proof could be provided either by showing statistically that nonviolent resistance campaigns have historically been as successful or more successful than violent ones (as done notably by Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011), or through a "well developed explanatory theory" (Stiehm, 1968, 26-27), that is, the mechanisms that cause nonviolent resistance to be effective.

This next section will introduce the main answers to this second question which are: nonviolence works better than violence because it allows for more (and more diverse) people to participate; nonviolence works better than violence because of the wide range of tactics within nonviolent resistance; and nonviolence works well because repression of nonviolent campaigns has a high chance of working in the campaign's favour rather than in their opponent's. In different ways, each of these arguments will be addressed and discussed further in each of the issue chapters of this thesis. Chapter Five is specifically about the role of regime repression, and the so-called backfire technique, and will examine potential problems and pitfalls in relying on this mechanism without criticism. Chapter Six and 7 will discuss, each in their own way, whether nonviolent campaigns are as inclusive and open to broad participation as they are seen to be, and what can potentially be done to improve accessibility and actively work against entrenched systems of violence, repression, and domination.

Greater participation

Nonviolence literature argues that nonviolent campaigns invite and allow for significantly greater numbers and more diverse participation than violent resistance does (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 32-33; Martin, 2015, 160). This is important to the relative effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns, both as a major difference in itself (although "numbers alone do not guarantee victory in resistance campaigns"), and also as the foundation for a number of other dynamics within nonviolent movements that make them more effective than violent ones (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 30, 39).

Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 30, 34) argue that this difference in participation is because violent struggle presents physical, informational, and moral barriers to participation, meaning that the main actors in violent campaigns will be young, able-bodied men. In contrast, nonviolent campaigns are open to, and dependent on the participation of "women, men, children, youth, adults, elders, and people from diverse sectors of society" (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 340; Chenoweth

and Stephan, 2011, 10, 34). However, this claim does have a limitation in that participation in a violent campaign is by the authors only counted as active fighters in a campaign, whereas actions such as “providing sanctuary, food, and supplies to guerrillas, raising funds, communicating messages, acting as informants, or refusing to cooperate with government attempts to apprehend insurgents” are all excluded from the count of participants of the insurgency (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 31). These higher and widened participation levels increase the chance of success through mechanisms such as “enhanced resilience, higher probabilities of tactical innovation, expanded civic disruption (thereby raising the costs to the regime of maintaining the status quo), and loyalty shifts involving the opponent’s erstwhile supporters, including members of the security forces” (*ibid*, 10). It is emphasised that especially women and elders can participate more easily in nonviolent campaigns than violent ones (*ibid*, 35), an argument which is especially relevant to the discussion of the participation argument in Chapter Six of this thesis.

The phrasing of “informational difficulties” refers to the fact that although there is an element of secrecy to both nonviolent and violent campaigns, nonviolent campaigns are able to publicise their activities to a larger extent than violent ones, and that this publicity is essential to recruitment (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 35). Chenoweth and Stephan (*ibid*, 36) argue that apart from simply an increased ease of information about how to join or support a movement, increased visibility can also lead to a different perception of risk, which will be seen as lower in a more visible resistance movement.

Moral barriers, meanwhile, are lower for participating in nonviolent campaigns than violent ones according to nonviolence research, because the use of direct violence to defeat a political opponent is a “moral dimension” in itself, even within complicated moral questions of political conflict (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 37). Because a certain part of the population will be against the use of violence, they will often choose not to support a violent campaign, even if they support their aims, whereas a nonviolent campaign “can potentially mobilize the entire aggrieved population without the need to face moral barriers” (*ibid*). What is not addressed here in terms of participation and moral barriers is whether a purist nonviolent campaign which would refuse supporters of violent methods an active or significant role in the nonviolent movement would present a different kind of moral barrier to participation – that of passing the purity test for membership, so to speak.

The two mechanisms of greater participation and a wider range of tactics are connected in a positive feedback loop. That is, the wider range of nonviolent tactics is a central reason for the lower physical barriers which allow for greater participation, since these tactics range in their level of risk, required physical endurance, etc. (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 35). At the same time, the authors (*ibid*, 40) argue that through greater participation will increase tactical innovation, which further expands the range of strategies available to a campaign. Resilience and longevity are two further mechanisms that are stronger in a resistance movement if participation is larger, and therefore where nonviolent campaigns have an advantage (*ibid*, 57-58).

Finally, the literature argues that nonviolent campaigns are open to participation by people with different levels of commitment, because of the wider range of tactics, whereas participation in a violent campaign will typically require a high level of commitment for training, as well as the risks associated with armed struggle (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 37). This argument does however seem to ignore the forms of support for a violent insurgency - such as providing food and shelter, or refusing to cooperate with authorities looking for insurgents - referenced above, which are not seen as being a way to participate in violent campaigns in the NAVCO dataset (*ibid*, 31).

Greater participation adds to the success of nonviolent resistance in a number of other ways. Among these are the argument that loyalty shifts among regime supporters are more likely when the resistance to the regime is through “mass noncooperation”, because, it is argued, “most people want to survive and to be on the winning side of a conflict” (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 220). This mechanism also includes the likelihood of successful negotiations with opponent elites, even if these elites do not fully defect, since nonviolent protesters “are more likely to appear as credible negotiating partners than are violent insurgents, thereby increasing the chance of winning concessions” (*ibid*, 11). Although it could certainly be questioned by which standards resistance movements are seen as credible or not credible depending on their use of violent methods, when the opposing side judging this “credibility” is often a highly repressive and wrongfully violent regime, the analysis in nonviolence literature does not critique this process, thereby confirming in a sense that nonviolent resisters simply are more credible. Further, the backfire effect of repression is more likely to work, the greater the number of participants is in a resistance campaign (*ibid*, 220). The larger civilian participation a campaign has, the more likely the campaign is to attract international support, and for their opponent to lose it, another factor which can contribute to the success of a

campaign (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 220-221; Martin, 2015, 160). This creates a potential for further complicating the role that violence plays in nonviolent resistance, since, as Stiehm (1968, 26) points out, “it is not clear that the use of force by others on one’s behalf is renounced since the resisters frequently call for police or judicial intervention, or warn that others may be tempted to riot if their demands are not met”. This question of the potential role of violence can also be extended to the role of violent international interventions in support of nonviolent resistance campaigns. However, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 10) state at the same time that while nonviolent campaigns are more likely to gain external allies because of their greater numbers, nonviolent campaigns are also less likely to depend strongly on this external support, again because of their greater participation.

Diversity of tactics

A part of the growth of the field of nonviolence literature has been the growth in the number of nonviolent tactics described; these are typically described as tactics not available to armed campaigns (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 11). This diversity of tactics is, as shown above, another central argument for why nonviolent resistance works, and is more effective than violent resistance. This has led not only to long lists of different nonviolent tactics, but also the development of different categories of nonviolent resistance (e.g. Bartkowski ed, 2013, 15-19).

On the relation between greater participation and greater diversity of tactics, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 56) argue that “tactical innovation occurs on the fringes of a movement” and therefore, campaigns with greater participation “and consequently wider margins, are more likely to produce tactical innovations”. However, this argument does require that the “fringes” of a movement has, or achieves, a degree of influence on strategic planning and decisions in order to actually be able to contribute their innovation. This is not a given, and is, to some extent, further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

A further assumption within this argument which is worth noting is that this diverse range of nonviolent tactics are available exclusively, or most effectively, for purely nonviolent campaigns, rather than also tactics a violent insurgency could employ. For example, Satha-Anand (2015, 297) demonstrates this, writing that “a committed adherence to nonviolent struggle will also enhance the strategists’ ability to optimize the complete range of available nonviolent alternatives”. However, it is not explained why that is, and why a partly violent campaign would not be able to

make full use of some nonviolent tactics as well.

A slightly different version of this division between violent campaigns as comprising almost exclusively of violent fighting, and nonviolent campaigns as being made up of a number of different tactics that share a lack of the direct use of violence, is the view that if any nonviolent tactics were used in a resistance movement, then this is an indication that a separate “nonviolent campaign” took place, underneath or alongside a violent one, rather than those tactics being an indication that a violent campaign may encompass a wide range of tactics as well, such as community building, education, etc. An example of this is the book on nonviolent independence struggles by Bartkowski (ed, 2013), which traces this history also in countries and struggles in which the dominant (or for the authors seemingly dominant) mode of struggle was armed (e.g. Bartkowski ed, 2013, 9-10 on Mozambique and Algeria). Another example of this assumption is the narrative of the nonviolent resistance to the Nazi invasion in Norway during the Second World War, which is used as an example of nonviolent civilian resistance to foreign occupation, or civilian defence (e.g. Benjamin, 1973, 198; Wehr, 1984). However, as Norwegian historian Magne Skodvin (quoted in Benjamin, 1973, 205) pointed out, “non-violent resistance was, at least in part, simply the most viable form of struggle for those who had no opportunity to use arms and had to find other ways of fighting the enemy”, and the Norwegian resistance consisted of violent and nonviolent resistance running parallel, with both being significant (Gilmour and Stephenson, 2013, 92-94). Thus, the Norwegian resistance movement is arguably a strong example of how violent campaigns can very well incorporate nonviolent tactics as part of their resistance, rather than an example of the strength of nonviolent resistance as opposed to violence.

Similarly, if a campaign is widely seen as nonviolent - through using mainly nonviolent methods most of the time - Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 12) claim that any existence of violence or violent groups is then because “members of fringe groups ... are acting independently, or in defiance of, the central leadership; or they are agent provocateurs used by the adversary to provoke the unarmed resistance to adopt violence”. Although the existence of so-called ‘mixed’ conflicts, in which “nonviolent and violent campaigns exist simultaneously among competing groups” is acknowledged (Bartkowski ed, 2013; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 12), again, this is viewed as a mix of nonviolent and violent conflict, rather than some of these tactics being also just part of violent conflict, or one single campaign being both violent and nonviolent (i.e., lacking a clear-cut division).

The following chapter of this thesis, on the history of nonviolence, will challenge this assumption through the case of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. Presbey (2006, 147), who writes about the South African struggle, critiques this division as well, arguing that many of the mechanisms which are said to make nonviolence such an effective strategy - such as noncooperation - could feasibly work equally well with the inclusion of violence, even for a campaign with inferior means of armed struggle to their opponent. They write that "it seems the crucial point here is not that the means chosen be nonviolent ones, but simply that the millions do something (anything) to noncooperate rather than cooperate" (*ibid*).

Backfire effect

The final central mechanism in the effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns is that of regime repression backfiring, a phenomenon which has been known by a number of terms within nonviolence literature. The argument is, simply, that if a nonviolent campaign is met with violent repression, then it may not defeat the resistance, but rather work against the regime or opponent instead (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 11, 226). This is in part determined by how well the resistance campaign responds to and makes use of the violence aimed at its participants (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 226; Martin, 2015, 154). Given the prominence that this particular dynamic is often given when explaining the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance, it is perhaps contradictory that nonviolent resistance is at the same time promoted as entailing considerably less risk for participants than armed struggle (for example Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 38).

The idea of the backfire dynamic lies at the centre of one of the main differences outlined between principled and strategic nonviolence - that of conversion and coercion. While the first versions of this dynamic, the concept of self-sacrifice, was a highly purist and religious idea of convincing an opponent of their wrong through stoic voluntary suffering at their hands (Isserman, 1986, 47; Stiehm, 1968, 24), more recent discussions of the dynamic focus on increasing leverage to coerce an opponent through an increase in support by making good strategic decisions in the aftermath of violent repression of a campaign (e.g. Martin, 2015, 154). The backfiring may have the effect of creating stronger support - a central goal for resistance struggles - for a campaign within the general population, amongst external actors such as other countries, or by leading to loyalty shifts within the regime's own ranks (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 50, 220; Martin, 2015, 160). An important, and arguably problematic, part of this argument is that repression backfire will only,

or much more likely, work if a resistance campaign is nonviolent (and does not react with violence to the repression) than if it is violent, because violence against violent campaigns is (more) justifiable (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 50-51; Martin, 2015, 160).

Conclusion

The literature review chapter has provided an overview of the history and main arguments of nonviolence literature. The following chapter will, in turn, give an overview of three nonviolent resistance campaigns which are part of the history of nonviolent resistance, focusing especially on important parts of a popular narrative of nonviolent resistance. As shown throughout this thesis, these two components – the research literature and the popular history – are highly influential in shaping present-day and recent nonviolent movements in their symbolism, framing of narrative, strategic choices, mobilisation methods, and so on.

The literature review argued firstly that it is important to understand the fundamental role that observation-based and naturalist methodologies hold within the field of nonviolent resistance. That is, the concepts, categories, and arguments within the field are overwhelmingly based on observations of concrete examples, with relatively little theoretical or conceptual analysis on its own, and characterised by an aim of articulating regularities and dynamics that cross temporal and cultural boundaries. An important effect of this is that concepts and definitional lines tend to be based on clear cases, rather than more ambiguous ones, and this means that the grey areas of concepts and definitional lines are often overlooked or only briefly mentioned. Further, the chapter argued that it is important to take note of the context of a given campaign, despite a tendency for nonviolent resistance to be viewed as a comparable unit of analysis across different times and contexts. A clear example of this is the use of nonviolence theory derived from anti-authoritarian campaigns in liberal democracies without considering fully the fact that there are aspects and mechanisms that will not work the same against a government which holds democratic legitimacy and wide-spread public support.

After this, the two strands of principled and strategic nonviolence were defined and discussed. While there are clear differences between the two approaches, the literature review also covered arguments that the two strands cannot be fully separated – that principles and normative preferences will have an effect on strategic deliberations and that even the most principled

movement will also be making choices with an eye on strategy – and that for the purposes of this thesis topic, they do not need to be kept strictly separate. This is because the argument that violence and violence definitions affect nonviolence applies to both principled and strategic nonviolence, although it will at times be emphasised that they will affect nonviolence in different ways, depending on whether principles or strategy is the overriding concern.

The literature review does not attempt to arrive at one overriding definition or conception of nonviolent resistance; this is based on the argument that the literature on nonviolent resistance does not allow an overall definition which will encompass the range of campaigns and literature, while at the same time not being so vague that it means almost nothing. It is also based on the argument that the concept of nonviolent resistance is inherently complex, blurry, and multi-dimensional. Instead, the literature review approaches the question of definition by providing an overview of the range of definitions, and importantly, the definitional strategies employed in the literature. These strategies provide a better understanding of not only the different definitions and conceptions of nonviolence, but also of the approach and methodology of the research, which is an important aspect of understanding the field.

Finally, this chapter provides a brief overview of the main mechanisms that make nonviolent resistance effective and sometimes successful. The basis of all these is an ability to mobilise more and more diverse participants in a nonviolent campaign, compared to violent uprisings. While this is an advantage simply in terms of numbers, the greater participation also allows for a more diverse range of tactics and can help strengthen the backfire effect. While the backfire effect is the subject of the first of this thesis' "issue" chapters, which discusses in depth the impact that violence against protesters can have, the participation argument is also discussed in further chapters. In this way, this project seeks to add to present nonviolence theory and understanding by demonstrating ways in which access to participation is limited for certain people and arguing that if this were to be addressed and access improved, this would further strengthen a major dynamic of nonviolent resistance.

The following chapter will discuss the history of nonviolent resistance, in particular a certain popular narrative of this which tends to be centred around leaders of movements and often purist framings of the movements as clearly and uncomplicatedly nonviolent. While this history of course raises its own questions around the relationship between violence and nonviolent resistance, some

of the tensions and issues that spring from the literature review will also appear again. This is important in part because it is both the stories told of past and great nonviolent movements, and recent research on nonviolent resistance techniques and dynamics, which influence movement choices and collective identities shaped around the labelling of one's movement as "nonviolent".

Chapter Three: The History of Nonviolence

In May 2016, the global climate grassroots movement 350.org launched a campaign named *Break Free*, aimed at financial organisations that invest in fossil fuels. *Break Free* was specifically named a “nonviolent direct action”, and the nonviolent aspect was heavily emphasised in materials published both before and after the event (350 Christchurch, 2016). As 350.org stated in a press release, the planned actions were “[i]nspired by the peaceful civil-disobedience of Te Whiti o Rongomai, Martin Luther King Jr, Gandhi and Rosa Parks” (350 Aotearoa, 2016a). A blog post by 350 Aotearoa reiterated this narrative of being part of a long and coherent tradition of nonviolent protesting, quoting blockades such as the 1981 Springbok Tour protest in Hamilton and the 1964 sit-in in San Francisco by the US civil rights movement as inspirations for the planned blockades of ANZ banks in New Zealand, and argued that these protests “always ... go down in history as being just and necessary, despite the complaints of people at the time” (350 Aotearoa, 2016b). The blog post claimed that *Break Free* 2016 “has been deemed the largest global civil disobedience that has ever occurred against fossil fuels”, and that each action that was part of the campaign “was informed by the decades of prior civil disobedience that shaped the history of social justice. Break Free represents one of the many successful legacies of historical civil disobedience campaigns” (350 Aotearoa, 2016b).

The *Break Free* campaign is only one out of a growing number of campaigns throughout the world that are specifically labelled as “nonviolent”. This particular trend illustrates a narrative of a long and coherent tradition of nonviolence, in which nonviolence is assumed to be an unproblematic and easily defined term. Following this it can also be assumed that nonviolent campaigns can be undertaken following a checklist of actions which is transferred from one context to another without much thought or reflection. An illustrative example of this is provided by Rev. John Dear, a staff member at Campaign Nonviolence. In *Waging Nonviolence*, an important online resource for nonviolent and social justice activism, Dear describes a 2018 week of action carried out by Campaign Nonviolence (Dear, 2018). Dear writes of one particular action, in which he participated and “risked arrest” as a “modest, Gandhian campaign”, with influences also of “Kingian nonviolence” (*ibid*). During the march, Dear describes how:

[w]e lined up two by two, and walked off in silence. At the Lincoln Memorial, we knelt down

in silence for a minute, as King did during the Birmingham marches ... Each one of us held a blue sign with a quote by Gandhi or King, and we called out, 'Abolish war, poverty, racism, nuclear weapons and environmental destruction! We want a culture of nonviolence!' (Dear, 2018)

What a "culture of nonviolence" would mean is left very vague, with the strongest focal points being exactly the figures of Gandhi and King, rather than specific aims or goals for the action in question. This illustrates well how this narrative of nonviolence sees nonviolence as a unifying principle in and of itself, of both people and causes. In this framing, nonviolent resistance becomes not simply a specific choice of which resistance tactics to not use (violent ones), but also "a site of the repeated performance of a specific activist identity" (Sommier et al., 2019, 243).

The importance of narrative is a recurring theme in this chapter's treatment of the independence movement in India, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and the civil rights movement in the US, as narratives become important to "make sense of" experiences (Farmer, 2011, 40). The march illustrates the performative aspect of the narrative, i.e. the idea that nonviolence can be copied and performed. However, even the idea of "copying" can be complicated by a focus on narrative processes, because the perception of what is copied is not necessarily universal or objective. As Farmer (*ibid*, 41) argues, "the world does not narrate itself to me. Rather, I narrate the world". At the end of the March, Dear describes how the protesters

had crossed the line into the no-protest zone. The police eventually approached, cleared an area around us on the sidewalk, and told us we would soon be arrested if we did not disperse. We thanked them and stayed put. So began our stand off, or our stand for peace. Nearly two hours later, we were still there, and realized that, in fact, the police were not going to arrest us. We ended our witness, gathered in a circle for a closing prayer, and promised one another to keep building up this movement of nonviolent resistance (Dear, 2018)

What this particular story of "risking arrest" - or arguably of trying to be arrested but failing to be - also illustrates, is the issue with taking actions from one context to another without thinking about how the different contexts might affect the outcome. The situation of trying to provoke an arrest, in order to demonstrate a conflict and a sense of resistance, with police or security personnel

realising the potential value of simply letting the protesters be, is not unknown (Wight, 2013). However, actions such as this, or the comparisons in the *Break Free* campaign to actions that presented a significantly higher risk to protesters¹, still occur. The narrative is, however, that “nonviolent struggles” are carried on through this performative idea of “Gandhian”, “Kingian” etc. nonviolence.

The special status that the independence movement in India, the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and the civil rights struggle in the US hold in popular narratives and imagination of a unified and coherent history and practice of nonviolence is the reason why this chapter focuses on those three. Further, since they are often seen as almost defined by the leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King, Jr., these three characters are central to the history laid out in the chapter. While this chapter will question and nuance some of the assumptions of coherence and universal applicability which are often made about these three movements, they are, of course, connected in different ways. For example, according to Fredrickson (1995, 225-226), the three nonviolent cases covered here – anti-colonial struggle in India under Gandhi, anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa under Nelson Mandela and civil rights struggles in the US under Martin Luther King, Jr. – have in common an anti-colonial outlook. Fredrickson argues that for the black protesters in the US and South Africa during the 1940s and 1950s, “nonviolence was not merely a set of abstract propositions and possibilities; it was also a form of resistance against white or European domination” (*ibid*, 226), in the same way that Gandhi’s nonviolence was not merely an idea of nonviolence being morally or practically superior, but also a meaningful way to resist British thinking and norms in and of itself. Further, the cases are at times directly connected through central actors learning from each other, or commenting on each other, such as when King spoke against the choice of embracing violent struggle in South Africa (Presbey, 2006, 159); however, the movements in South Africa and the US were also connected through arguments for violent resistance, since some of the influential voices from the US in South Africa “were voices which advocated violence” (Presbey, 2006, 159).

¹ When discussing the risk of certain actions, it is important to be aware that the risk will often vary for different protesters, even at the same action. Thus, when arguing that *Break Free* actions in Aotearoa New Zealand are low-risk because of the culture of policing there, this does not account for the massively heightened risk of arrest that the Māori population, as well as other communities of colour, faces. This is, however, still a less repressive and violent situation than that of an authoritarian regime or the British colonial power in India. These different levels of risk and their implications for nonviolent resistance are discussed at more length in later chapters of this thesis.

This chapter will start by providing a brief overview of each struggle, centred around its perceived central protagonist. After this, it will show and discuss different ways in which both a pragmatism of methods, and violence, played a role in these movements, followed by a discussion of two other possible themes that can be drawn out from these histories: that of charismatic leadership or “lone male hero” of nonviolence, and the tension between specificity and universalism. Finally, a conclusion will draw together the arguments of the chapter and point to where these will be explored more fully in the rest of the thesis.

Mahatma Gandhi and the anti-colonial struggle in India

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, or Mahatma Gandhi, remains a hugely important figure and popular cultural reference point in the area of nonviolence. Gandhi takes his place in the narrative mainly through his leading role in the Indian independence movement against British colonial rule and for his many writings on the topic of nonviolent resistance (Baldoli, 2019, 4; Chakrabarty, 2006, 75; Martin, 2015, 147; Terchek, 2000, 1). He is associated with a strong image as an icon “sitting beside a spinning wheel pouring scorn on science and modernity” conveying simple, universal truths about a better way of life (Mishra, 2018; Shillam, 2018), used in popular culture, on T-shirts, anarchist imagery, and in advertisements. Gandhi is credited as both an influential advocate of the moral reasons for choosing nonviolence, as well as with building the strategic thinking about it by taking spontaneous, untrained nonviolent resistance and turning it into a highly disciplined method of struggle (Fredrickson, 1995, 227-228; Martin, 2015, 147). However, as Gandhi was a highly unsystematic writer, and as uncertainty remains about his exact practices, his conception of nonviolence is not clear and can be misunderstood (Baldoli, 2019, 2, 4)

Gandhi started to develop his theory and practice of nonviolent resistance while living in another British colony, South Africa, between 1893 and 1914 (McLaughlan, 2016, 431). While practicing as a lawyer in South Africa, he witnessed the inequality and oppression that the Indian population there was placed under, and this had a “radicalising effect” on him (*ibid*). During this period Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj*, a key work in nonviolence literature and the first time that Gandhi presented his theory of an alternative to violent resistance to British colonial rule (*ibid*, 432). This theory would later be extensively elaborated on in various other writings, largely Indian newspapers (Gandhi, 2007/1909, 111; Martin, 2015, 147).

The central concept in Gandhi's thinking is *satyagraha*, which has become an important idea in the nonviolence literature. *Satyagraha* translates roughly to "truth force" or "soul force" (Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 85; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 17; Terchek, 2000, 180) and uses the power of numbers to withdraw consent to be governed (Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 85, 94). When Gandhi was first developing his theories in South Africa, he referred to this as "passive resistance" instead of the later *satyagraha*. He defines it as:

a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law, and accept my penalty for its breach, I use soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self (Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 90).

The importance of the concept of personal suffering is emphasised in this quote, and is one that will be explored in different parts of this thesis as an important aspect of Gandhi's nonviolence, as well as later developments of the concept.

In 1914, Gandhi left South Africa after "limited" success there to return to India, where he was already a well known figure (Parekh, 1997, 6). He was returning to India with a plan ready for the "regeneration" of the country through nonviolent means. At this time, he was still maintaining his support for the British empire, and so independence was not part of this plan (Baldoli, 2019, 9-10; Parekh, 1997, 6). Upon arrival in India, Gandhi travelled throughout the country to listen to the concerns of the population, and concluded from this that the people wanted better representation and a less oppressive colonial rule (Sharma, 2013, 72-73). During the next few years, Gandhi listened to the concerns and hopes of the population, built a team of helpers, developed further his strategy for mobilisation, and solidified his status as a national leader and a symbol of a different way of life built on the revival of "Indian civilisation" (Parekh, 1997, 7). In 1919, after the passing of further restrictive laws banning "revolutionary conspiracies", Gandhi launched his first national *satyagraha*, however, the campaign suffered from instances of violence, leading Gandhi to cancel the campaign again (Parekh, 1997, 12).

In 1919, a large group of protesters in Amritsar were shot at by police while in a confined

square and it soon emerged that many protesters were shot while trying to run away (Presbey, 2006, 153). The event became an embarrassment for Britain, since the British commander at Amritsar could not provide justification for why the soldiers kept shooting at defenseless protesters who were trying to escape (*ibid*). It was also the defining factor in Gandhi's decision to seek full Indian independence, although he did not formally call for this for another 11 years (Sharma, 2013, 73). Although the Amritsar massacre was horrifying and led to the death of nearly 400 protesters and over 1000 wounded (Gandhi, 1970, 188), this did not decrease support for nonviolence within the movement, or in Gandhi (Presbey, 2006, 153). Rather, Gandhi used the massacre to emphasise the importance of training and discipline, writing:

If the message of non-violence had reached [the protesters], they would have been expected when fire was opened on them to march towards it with bare breasts and die rejoicing in the belief that it meant the freedom of their country ... We played into General Dyer's hands because we acted as he had expected. He wanted us to run away from his fire, he wanted us to crawl on our bellies and to draw lines with our noses ... The might of the tyrant recoils upon himself when it meets with no response (quoted in Presbey, 2006, 154).

Gandhi was, as Presbey (2006, 154) also argues, asking "an enormous amount" of the protesters by declaring that they should simply walk towards soldiers shooting into the crowd. But the theme of strengthening one's mind and body to be able to practice *satyagraha* is one that Gandhi discusses several times, and this discussion is therefore an example of a wider theme in Gandhi's conception of nonviolence (see for example Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 96).

In 1920, Gandhi launched a "Non-cooperation Movement" which lasted for about two years, based on the idea of taking power away from the colonial state by simply refusing to cooperate with it (Parekh, 1997, 12). In March 1922, Gandhi was arrested and put on trial for his leadership of the movement. During the trial, he demonstrated a central part of nonviolent civil disobedience, by pleading guilty to the charge, but using the trial to put forward political arguments for why the disobedience was justified and necessary (*ibid*, 13). Although the British judge was "deeply moved" by the arguments, Gandhi was nevertheless sentenced to six years in prison, but was released early due to his health (*ibid*). Although the Non-cooperation Movement did not last long, it raised support for the goal of political independence and drew a large number of Indians into the resistance

movement (*ibid*, 14). From the mid-1920s, political unrest and violence were both growing in India, and Gandhi, concerned about this, thought that civil disobedience would be necessary to stop the unrest and to prevent an armed rebellion. It was this set of circumstances that led him to launch his campaign against the establishment of a tax on salt in India (*ibid*, 15).

The “Salt March” of 1930 would become the most famous of Gandhi’s campaigns in India. It was a protest march intended to challenge British laws which gave the colonial rulers a monopoly on salt production (Martin, 2015, 147-148). The thoroughly planned march lasted for 24 days, with the aim of mobilising supporters and securing media attention along the way, and ended with an act of civil disobedience – the production of sea salt – as well as an attempt to enter a salt manufacturing facility in Dharasana (Martin, 2015, 148, 151). Gandhi and several other protesters were arrested while trying to produce salt, while the march on the salt factory was “a classic confrontation between peaceful protesters and armed police”, as the protesters walked calmly towards the entrance while being beaten by police trying to block them (Martin, 2015, 148). The protest and violence at Dharasana also clearly demonstrates one of the ways discussed in this thesis in which violence plays a role in nonviolent protesting, through the potential for backfire effect (Martin, 2015, 149). Although the event immediately seemed to be a victory for the police, since the action had to be called off due to the number of injured protesters, the action mobilised a great deal of new support for the Indian independence movement both domestically and internationally, and unified the movement within India (Martin, 2015, 148).

In 1934 Gandhi left the Indian National Congress Party after leading it since the 1920s in order to focus on more community- and grassroots-focused activities such as village economics, “communal unity, hand spinning, weaving, and the abolition of untouchability as prerequisites for independence” (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 167; Sharma, 2013, 85; Wolpert, 2001, 252). Despite the importance that Gandhi assigned to these issues and strategies as part of *satyagraha*, the more “commonly known” tactics of direct, confrontational civil disobedience continue to be more well-known and emulated (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 17). India became independent from the British empire in August 1947, amidst growing violence between communities in the country (Wolpert, 2001, 344). During the last years of his life, Gandhi struggled with the increasing occurrence of violence in India, and the aftermath of the partition of the country (Sharma, 2013, 94; Wolpert, 2002, 21). Gandhi embarked on a fast and a pilgrimage to the northern regions where the violence

was worst, to listen to people's concerns, but also to argue against partition and nationalism (Sharma, 2013, 94-97; Wolpert, 2002, 342). Gandhi was assassinated on the 30th of January 1948, after increasing violence in India, as well as increasing threats against Gandhi himself (Sharma, 2013, 97). He left behind an image and legacy as India's *Mahatma*, "Great Soul", and as one of the founding figures of the tradition of nonviolent resistance (Chakrabarty, 2006, 75; Martin, 2015, 147; Terchek, 2000, 1; Wolpert, 2002, 18).

Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid struggle

The South African anti-apartheid struggle is an important example for nonviolent movements and theory, with Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu in particular standing out as two heroes of nonviolence in popular narratives. While the long struggle for political freedom in South Africa used a wide range of tactics, including violent ones (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 15), it is nevertheless used by a number of nonviolent movements as an example of their inspiration for nonviolence (e.g. Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020). Nelson Mandela is known for his leading role in both the African National Congress (ANC) and their armed wing Umkonto we Sizwe (MK), and becoming the first democratically elected President of South Africa in 1994 (Boehmer, 2008, 10, 45, 53). Desmond Tutu is known for his involvement with the ANC, and especially for his leading role in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 1996 (Chasi, 2018, 232-233).

Further, the occurrence of some violent struggle has made the anti-apartheid struggle central to nonviolence theory as an important point of debate, with a number of arguments all centred around the line between violent and nonviolent campaigns. Examples of these include arguments that even limited violence undermines the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 151; Zunes, 1999, 139-140); that violence and nonviolence can at times work together and strengthen one another, or can simply be nearly impossible to distinguish (Seidman, 2000; Presbey, 2006); and that South Africa was simply "nonviolent enough" to count as a nonviolent campaign because the struggle was principally nonviolent, and the violence used mainly "symbolic" (Presbey, 2006, 141; Steele to Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 168). This final argument echoes a definition of nonviolent struggle as struggles that are mainly nonviolent, and where violent factions are principally symbols of resistance, put forward by Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 4).

The anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa is also featured as an example of nonviolent campaigns in some of the nonviolence literature, including by Ackerman and DuVal's *A Force More Powerful* (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 22), and Chenoweth and Stephan's (2011, 79, 234-235) *Why Civil Resistance Works*, in which they class the anti-apartheid struggle as two separate nonviolent campaigns, from the 1950s to the 1960s, and from 1984-1994. However, in the present discussion the entire struggle is seen as one campaign, which combined violent and nonviolent methods at different times, but which nonetheless is clearly influential to thinking about nonviolent history and methods, and therefore appropriate in this chapter and thesis.

In 1948, the Afrikaner Nationalist party won the election, and their government started to establish the apartheid system, a "grand design" for South African society to separate the country's citizens according to race and maintain white supremacy in the country (Fredrickson, 1995, 244). This meant that although the situation for Black South Africans had already been one of economic and legal inequality, the situation was growing worse (Fredrickson, 1995, 237-238). During the 1940s and early 1950s support for mass nonviolent action for racial justice grew in South Africa and became the prime mode of struggle against apartheid in an attempt "to imitate Gandhi's success in India" (Fredrickson, 1995, 237; Seidman, 2000, 162). While the 1950s were then dominated by the occurrence of classic nonviolent actions such as "bus boycotts, demonstrations, petitions, pass-burning campaigns", the government response to this was violent and repressive (Seidman, 2000, 162). The main action of this period, and the major nonviolent anti-apartheid campaign of South African history, was the Defiance Campaign in 1952-1953, a Gandhian-inspired substantive campaign of nonviolent civil disobedience (Fredrickson, 1995, 241; Presbey, 2006, 150; Seidman, 2000, 162-163; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 148). It was especially the newly established ANC Youth League, with Nelson Mandela as a member, which pushed for more confrontational opposition to apartheid, as opposed to petitioning and trying to convince white politicians to provide more equality (Fredrickson, 1995, 246; Presbey, 2006, 151; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 149). Although the campaign did not succeed in terms of achieving legal and policy changes, a hugely ambitious goal in any case (Fredrickson, 1995, 246), it was highly successful in terms of mass mobilisation and a rapidly growing membership of the ANC (Seidman, 2000, 162). The South African government responded with significant repression and violence, passing increasingly draconian laws, targeting leaders and so on (Seidman, 2000, 162). In 1953, after failing to have the protested

laws repealed, the Defiance Campaign turned substantially more violent, and this was followed by a number of repressive laws banning even nonviolent civil disobedience (Fredrickson, 1995, 247; Presbey, 2006, 151). Following the end of the Defiance Campaign, the ANC remained active on a smaller scale, holding congresses and defining policy; however, leading activists were continuing to be targeted by the government through arrests and lengthy court cases for treason (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 161).

Although the court case against ANC leaders produced some publicity for the ANC and their goals (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 161), it took another event of major violence to gain widespread attention to the anti-apartheid movement. The demonstration and police violence in the township of Sharpeville in March 1960 is perhaps the most famous single event in the anti-apartheid struggle, and became a major symbol of “the government’s refusal to permit any kind of peaceful protest” (Seidman, 2000, 162). The protest in Sharpeville was not organised by the ANC, but by another Gandhian-inspired organisation which did not focus on training protesters before actions (Presbey, 2006, 153; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 162). As about 5000 people arrived at the police station in Sharpeville to turn in their registration passes and be arrested, police were surprised and had no plan of action, since the crowd was too large to arrest everyone (Presbey, 2006, 153). After some minor fighting broke out, police opened fire, killing 69 people and wounding 180 – almost all shot in the back as they were trying to run away from the scene (Presbey, 2006, 153; Seidman, 2000, 162; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 2). The event was a turning point for the anti-apartheid movement, leading to widespread conviction among Black South Africans that “nonviolence, as a tactic, had been tried and failed” (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 150). As with the change to confrontational nonviolent methods, it was especially the younger ANC members, including Mandela, who insisted on departing from strict nonviolence (Fredrickson, 1995, 241; Presbey, 2006, 155). Following the Sharpeville massacre and the reaction to it, even more repressive laws were established, both the ANC and other resistance groups were banned, and 18,000 people were detained (Presbey, 2006, 153; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 151).

These developments led to an effective repression of public protest in South Africa by the early 1960s (Seidman, 2000, 164). Following this, Mandela and other resistance leaders went underground and began organising Umkonto we Sizwe (MK), the armed wing of the ANC, with Mandela as its first commander (Presbey, 2006, 155; Seidman, 2000, 164). In 1961, the MK carried

out their first bombings, and produced their manifesto which argued that the anti-apartheid movement now only had the options of “submit or fight”, with the commitment to fighting limited by a “strong moral restraint and [emphasis on] minimizing the loss of life” (Presbey, 2006, 156; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 163). As Seidman (2000, 164) points out, this limitation is worth noticing, since the extreme segregation of South African society meant that if the MK had aimed at killing or harming white South Africans, this would have been easy, as “potential targets could be found everywhere”. The MK continued this campaign of sabotage and property destruction until the discovery of MK headquarters in 1963 and the arrest of several leaders including Nelson Mandela (Presbey, 2006, 157). The trial took place during 1964, and the MK leaders were found guilty of treason and sentenced to over 25 years in prison (*ibid*).

During the imprisonment, Amnesty International did not add the ANC members to their list of prisoners of conscience, despite pressure to do so (Seidman, 2000, 164). This was because Amnesty International classified the ANC as an organisation as violent because of the armed wing, and therefore, an ANC member would automatically be excluded from the classification, even if the prisoner in question had only participated in nonviolent actions, although this policy was partially amended in the 1980s (*ibid*, 164, 166 footnote 3). However, the United Nations maintained their support for the liberation movement despite the turn to armed struggle (Presbey, 2006, 143; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 147). This, once again, demonstrates that the case of the anti-apartheid struggle is an example of the complications and vagueness of the definitions of violent and nonviolent struggle. At the trial, Mandela had defended the tactics used by listing the nonviolent measures that had been tried and met with heavy repression and violence, as well as the commitment of all the defendants to avoiding loss of life with MK actions (Presbey, 2006, 157). Throughout imprisonment, he maintained a conviction of the morality of turning to armed struggle and rejected offers from the government to be released in return for renouncing the ANC armed struggle (Seidman, 2000, 164). From around the mid-1970s, while Nelson Mandela was still imprisoned, new tactics reflecting increasing urbanisation were developed in the anti-apartheid movement, which started to consider, for example, student strikes in urban centres, workers strikes, and the demands for better urban services by black communities. This was also the start of the Black Consciousness Movement (Seidman, 2000, 164; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 152).

In 1976, another famous South African protest occurred, when students of all ages in the

township of Soweto boycotted classes to protest the segregation of schools and inferior education for Black students. The protest provoked “extraordinary police repression” (Presbey, 2006, 160; Seidman, 2000, 165). Many students were subjected to extreme violence, including one of the leaders Steven Biko who died in police detention (Presbey, 2006, 160). The repression sparked an urban uprising, as well as strong international reactions (Presbey, 2006, 160; Seidman, 2000, 165). Although the Soweto uprising was not organised by the ANC, the organisation, as well as the MK, benefitted from it, since youths who had been expelled from school joined the MK in other countries, where the MK was now able to establish camps to teach specialised resistance tactics as well as political education (Presbey, 2006, 160). The MK then carried on the commitment that the ANC had consistently emphasised to educate and train grassroots before actions were carried out. Although the MK remained active in this period, the strategy of principled military and economic sabotage was not successful in seriously putting the apartheid government under pressure (Seidman, 2000, 164). This was partly why instructions changed to focus attacks on “symbols of apartheid” as a form of “armed propaganda”, emphasising the often symbolic nature of armed resistance in South Africa (Presbey, 2006, 161; Seidman, 2000, 164; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 152, 168). Although the activities of the MK were then limited in this period, and never became “full guerrilla or people’s warfare”, these attacks nevertheless produced considerable visibility for the MK and ANC (Seidman, 2000, 164; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 152).

The 1980s saw an escalation of activity and increased range of targets from the MK, the ANC’s armed wing, which led to an ANC spokesperson declaring that the safety of civilians could no longer be guaranteed, although the MK would not be targeting them (Presbey, 2006, 161). However, in 1985, this was changed in a major policy change during an ANC conference in Zambia, at which white civilians were included as possible targets (*ibid*). The ANC did, however, still decide to focus on sabotage (*ibid*). In response, the South African government called a State of Emergency, which vastly increased the powers of the government, and between 1985 and 1987, more than 10,000 activists were detained (Presbey, 2006, 161; Seidman, 2000, 165). Despite these changes, very few of the MK attacks during these years involved civilian deaths, and most of the ones that did were carried out by “rogue” ANC guerrillas “cut off from their lines of communication or desperate over the level of repression” (Seidman, 2000, 164). By the late 1980s, nonviolent mass actions such as student boycotts were disrupting black high schools and universities so often that there were

official concerns about shortages of skilled workers in the future. Township “civic associations” were also increasingly active (*ibid*, 165). The strength of these disruptive actions was their focus on “methods of dispersion”, by disrupting the functioning of apartheid “without exposing individual leaders to arrest, or provoking immediate police attacks”, thereby protecting participants better than other more concentrated tactics (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 56; Seidman, 2000, 164).

The importance of the international solidarity movement’s consumer boycotts of South Africa, as well as pressure from other states, in securing Mandela’s release from prison and the end of apartheid, is well known and narrated in the history of the anti-apartheid movement and research on nonviolent tactics (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 223). Although not much came of it at the time, Martin Luther King Jr. had in 1964 called for international support through economic sanctions as part of his call for South Africans to return to fully nonviolent struggle (Presbey, 2006, 159). This was, arguably, the start of “an international version of nonviolent action which had not yet been tried” (*ibid*). However, it was a long struggle for anti-apartheid activists to secure this international support.

In 1985 when Bishop Desmond Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize, as previous ANC President Albert Luthuli had in 1961, Tutu’s speech echoed “Luthuli’s appeals [in 1961] for international pressure as a way to prevent violence” (Seidman, 2000, 162). In 1985, this support was still not forthcoming, largely due to vetoing by Britain and the United States against UN resolutions imposing such sanctions (*ibid*). Luthuli and Tutu were seemingly right in their predictions, since the effect of the 1984 “mild economic sanctions” and the refusal by international banks to extend loans, was immediate in undermining support for apartheid in the white population and putting pressure on the government which was highly dependent on trade relations to maintain the economy (Presbey, 2006, 162; Seidman, 2000, 162).

Following in the footsteps of the 1952 Defiance Campaign, a new campaign of the same name was launched in 1989 (Presbey, 2006, 162). The new Defiance Campaign was even further away from the Gandhian ideal of disciplined and controlled nonviolence, but the mass nonviolent demonstrations nevertheless pressured the government into negotiations, marking “the beginning of the end of apartheid” (*ibid*). However, in 1992, as the conditions in South Africa were looking like they were improving after Nelson Mandela’s release, the unbanning of the ANC, and the start of negotiations, another event of violence against protesters occurred. A group of anti-apartheid

activists, inspired by the popular mass actions in Eastern Europe at the time, called on volunteers to meet and protest in the small town of Bisho (Seidman, 2000, 161). The guards at the stadium on which the protest descended panicked and started shooting at the protesters, killing 28 and wounding more than 200 (*ibid*).

In 1994, South Africa held its first open election, electing Nelson Mandela as President (Boehmer, 2008, 76). The process of building peace and increasing equality after the conflict is another famous aspect of South African history. The establishment and work of the 1996 Truth and Reconciliation Commission was based on an ANC proposal after they had investigated, and confirmed, human rights violations in some of their training camps (Verdoolaege, 2007, 7). The proposed goal for the commission was to investigate “all violations of human rights since 1948” (*ibid*). The commission’s post-conflict work is hailed as a unique manifestation of transitional justice ideas, which are a possible avenue for emerging democracies (Sitze, 2013, 1). The commission was established through the TRC act, which stated that the commission’s purpose was to “promote national unity and reconciliation in a spirit of understanding which transcends the conflicts and divisions of the past” (Verdoolaege, 2007, 8), thus emphasising a sense of forgiveness, although one that only came through the taking of responsibility by the perpetrator through telling the truth of their actions (Tutu in Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, xi-xii).

Martin Luther King Jr.’s civil rights movement

The figure of Martin Luther King Jr. has become a major part of not only the idea of nonviolent resistance, but also of American political history and identity. King’s image, speeches and writing, and materials and anthems from the civil rights struggle are used around the world by nonviolent resistance movements (Finley et al, 2015, 6). His image and story have however also been used by various political actors on both the right and the left in the US as “a convenient icon” often “used to whitewash [America’s] blood-stained racial history” to make progress towards racial equality seem inevitable rather than a continuing battle (Dyson, 2001, XV-XVI, 3).

Segregation in the Southern states of the United States was a legal, social, and enforced system of maintaining white supremacy (often referred to as “Jim Crow”) that ran from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century (Berrey, 2015, 2). The Jim Crow system was famous for images of toilets, water fountains, and restaurants being signed for “Whites Only” or “Blacks Only”,

but consisted, apart from the segregation of spaces, of “racial discrimination, disfranchisement, and lynching”, all functioning together to “solidify and extend white political and economic power” (*ibid*, 3). The struggle against segregation and for racial justice, including through nonviolent resistance, therefore pre-dates the more famous period of 1955-1965, and the 1950s saw a number of improvements, especially in the legal system (Fredrickson, 1995, 235-236). The culmination of the legal battles for civil rights came with a 1954 Supreme Court Ruling making segregation of schools unlawful (Fredrickson, 1995, 237). However, even with the banning of racial segregation in schools, this was at times only able to be enforced through the use of state arms, as in Little Rock in 1957 where federal troops had to escort black students into their school (Nimtz, 2016, 4). In addition to this limitation on the practical effects of legal victories, the “apparent success” of the legal strategy also worked to convince moderate Black leaders and white liberals that “mass protest and direct action were unnecessary” and might even work against further progress (Fredrickson, 1995, 236).

For King, 1955-1965 was a defining decade, which saw not only the start of his engagement with the civil rights struggle, but also the establishment of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the development and solidification of their unique model for nonviolent civil rights struggle (Kirk, 2004, 89; Nimtz, 2016, 3). This important period started with the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 as the first major civil disobedience campaign against Jim Crow laws, and ended with the 1965 march from Selma to Montgomery as the last of these (Kirk, 2004, 89; Nimtz, 2016, 3). Along with the civil disobedience actions led by the SCLC and King, a number of other famous civil rights campaigns took place in this period, including the college student-led lunch counter sit-ins and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) Freedom Rides (Nimtz, 2016, 6). The civil rights struggle was receiving increasing national and international attention in this period, in part due to the extreme violence used against protesters (Fredrickson, 1995, 264; Nimtz, 2016, 3, 6). Because of this massive attention, as well as the culmination of the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, this period is the main foundation of the narrative around Martin Luther King Jr. and his role in the civil rights struggle (Fredrickson, 1995, 263-265).

As stated above, the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 was the first of the major civil rights campaigns involving the SCLC and King and launched the specific mode of struggle which made the civil rights movement an iconic case of nonviolent resistance (Finley et al., 2015, x; Nimtz, 2016, 3). The campaign started in 1955, when Rosa Parks famously refused to move away from her bus seat,

as segregation laws mandated she do (Finley et al., 2015, x). While Parks is often portrayed as a kind of accidental maker of history, she was in fact a seasoned member of women's rights organisations – who had already discussed a bus boycott – and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and had already tried to resist public transportation segregation several times (Dyson, 2001, 203; Fredrickson, 1995, 254). After Parks' arrest, the Montgomery Women's Political Council responded quickly to organise a boycott (Dyson, 2001, 203). King became involved through his leadership of another local association which ended up carrying out the campaign, and has since been given most of the credit in narratives of the boycott, reinforced by King's own statements (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 6; Dyson, 2001, 203-204). The Montgomery bus boycott launched a "meteoric rise to leadership" for King, but after the campaign ended, he fell behind the wider civil rights movement and their high-profile civil disobedience actions, had different opinions to many other civil rights leaders on the importance of appealing to the conscience of white people, and on whether nonviolent direct action was needed if voting rights could be secured (Dyson, 2001, 33; Kirk, 2004, 37).

The possibility of a campaign in Albany, Georgia, in 1961 was an opportunity to raise King's profile and influence again; however, the Albany campaign was a failure for King and the newly formed SCLC (Kirk, 2004, 63). The SCLC was set up by King following the success in Montgomery. At the end of 1963, Albany's police chief boasted that "Albany is as segregated as ever", while the NAACP executive secretary concluded that "[d]irect action, for all the exhilaration it had produced in Montgomery, with the sit-ins and the Freedom Rides, had suddenly come up against a hard, unmoving rock" (both quoted in Kirk, 2004, 77). Despite this failure, King and the SCLC did learn a number of lessons there, including the effects of fighting with other civil rights groups, especially with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) who were continuously sceptical of King's involvement in campaigns started by others (*ibid*, 90-91), the importance of advance planning, and, most importantly, the potential for clever and restrained policing to undermine the effectiveness of nonviolent action. In other words, the last lesson learned was the importance of being able to show excessive police violence against civil rights protesters in order to gain national attention and support. This last lesson would become a major part of the specific mode of nonviolent struggle practiced by King and the civil rights movement (Kirk, 2004, 89; Nimitz, 2016, 2; Satha-Anand, 2015, 294-295).

Following the failure in Albany, the 1963 campaign in Birmingham, Alabama would turn out to be an important victory for King and the SCLC which was struggling at the time (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 36, 48). In 1963, King produced some of his most famous work, including the *Letter from Birmingham Jail* at the height of the Birmingham campaign, and the *I Have a Dream* speech during the March on Washington in August of that year, both statements which are “premised on the goodness of” others, including opponents, as the foundation for social change (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 34). This aspect of King’s rhetoric has been particularly important in the making of the narrative of King as both a lone genius and a unifying figure in American political history, as expanded on later in this chapter (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 36, 40-41, 98-99). *I Have a Dream* has become especially famous as one of the most iconic moments of not only King’s career but the civil rights struggle (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 1, 76). The speech and letter, as King’s rhetoric in general, made heavy use of religious rhetoric, style, and basic moral foundations (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 72-73).

Having learned the importance of planning ahead during the Albany campaign, the choice of Birmingham for their next campaign was highly deliberate, and made for a number of reasons, including an existing invitation from a local civil rights leader, the reputation of Birmingham as one of the most violent and racist cities in the US, and concerns within the white business community of losing customers because of this, which opened up a possibility for pressure and negotiation (Kirk, 2004, 78; Nimitz, 2016, 6). The campaign made use of a wide range of tactics, with the aim of provoking a violent reaction from local law enforcement in order to attract national attention (Nimitz, 2016, 6). When this initially failed due to police restraint and less local support than expected, what has since been named the “children’s crusade” was launched, an action in which black high school students and younger children were mobilised for protest (Kirk, 2004, 81, 84-85; Nimitz, 2016, 6-7). Although the decision to place children and young adults at the front lines of the struggle was and remains controversial and criticised by figures such as Malcolm X and the (NAACP), it did lead to a rise in mobilisation of black adults, and subsequently the images of violent repression needed to attract attention from the Kennedy administration (Kirk, 2004, 85; Nimitz, 2016, 7-8). Although the situation in Birmingham was at times close to escalating out of control for the SCLC, the campaign resulted in a negotiated deal to desegregate the city, which was eventually backed by the federal government as well (Kirk, 2004, 88; Nimitz, 2016, 8).

The campaign in Selma, Alabama, and the three attempts at marching from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery became the culmination of the SCLC's era of mass civil disobedience actions, and a major victory in the civil rights struggle (Finley et al., 2015, 4). Once again, the SCLC and King worked with the SNCC and local activists in Selma – a carefully chosen target because of its extreme voter suppression and violent local sheriff – to carry out a number of nonviolent direct actions for voting rights (Kirk, 2001, 122-123). Many of these actions led to clashes with law enforcement and violence against protesters, and reports and images of this violence were important for raising national attention and support (Nimtz, 2016, 16-18). King was arrested during the Selma campaign, in part by design in order to escalate the campaign. Despite his incarceration, he insisted on being consulted on major decisions to maintain personal control of the campaign (Dyson, 2001, 30; Kirk, 2004, 126). During the Selma campaign, support from local courts, as well as President Johnson, led to tension over whether to escalate or slow down the campaign, with King strongly in favour of keeping protests going (Kirk, 2004, 126-127). When King left prison, he advocated publicly for national support and met with President Johnson who assured him that voter protection legislation was being prepared (*ibid*, 127). Meanwhile in Selma, locals had been pushed to their limit, and tensions grew over tactics while confrontations with police turned increasingly violent (*ibid*). While these issues and the prompting of federal action led King and the SCLC to decide to declare the Selma campaign a success and move to nearby counties, the plan was interrupted when a young Black man at a protest was shot by police (*ibid*, 128-129).

It was in response to this that King came up with the idea to organise a protest from Selma to Montgomery, and although the plan was thought risky and unlikely to succeed, planning went ahead (Kirk, 2004, 128-129). The SNCC did not support the march, which they thought put locals through unnecessary risk, but let their members march since they also did not want to abandon the locals they had worked with. Meanwhile, the SCLC decided that King would not be marching since they wanted him in Washington as a lobbyist rather than in prison (Kirk, 2004, 130). The first attempted march ended with a violent attack on protesters by state troopers blocking a bridge, after King had instructed organisers not to change the route (Nimtz, 2016, 18). The event was later named “Bloody Sunday”, and received nationwide attention due to the footage on national news of the extreme violence used against the protesters (Kirk, 2004, 131-132). The second attempt at marching to Montgomery was less successful in attracting support for the civil rights movement. In what

became known as King's "Tuesday Turnaround", state troopers managed to humiliate King and the march by breaking an agreement that they would block the bridge, but not attack protesters as the march would turn back. Instead, the troopers moved aside and invited the march to continue, but King still turned back and was seen as losing face and selling out local movements not only by doing so, but also by having made an agreement with state authorities, and for being reluctant to admit to this fully (*ibid*, 132-134).

Despite this, the mood across the US remained in favour of the civil rights struggle, both amongst the population, from Congress members, and President Johnson (Kirk, 2004, 134). Court hearings about the Selma march were taking place, and the judge echoed President Johnson's support by upholding the movement's right to peaceful assembly, with an order to the state of Alabama to adequately protect the new march proposed by SCLC (*ibid*, 136). Subsequently, a third attempt was announced, and federal protection provided when the Alabama Governor failed to provide this, making the march "a victory parade rather than a demonstration" and a "homecoming of sorts" for King, who lead the march and spoke to the crowd in Montgomery (*ibid*, 136). This march also represented a change in atmosphere and tactics in the civil rights movement, sensed for example by Rosa Parks who joined the march but felt "alienated from a new generation of activists who were more vocal and angry and full of rage and curse words", and was pushed out of the march because she was not wearing the right colour clothes (Dyson, 2001, 310). For King, this change in atmosphere would become influential in the direction of the last few years of his life (Finley et al., 2016, ix-x).

After effectively gaining federal legal responses to their two major demands with the passing of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights act, a significant change in focus took place for both King and the wider civil rights movement (Finley et al., 2015, ix; Kirk, 2004, 137). The experience of moving to the northern US and attempting to do social work there, along with a number of riots in urban centres over racial injustice significantly changed King's view on racism and sparked his work to start a northern-based campaign (Dyson, 2001, 37; Kirk, 2004, 122). King chose to move to a ghetto in Chicago with his family in 1965 because he had concluded that his nonviolent strategies would be effective at fighting racial and economic inequality (Dyson, 2001, 37-38; Finley et al., 2015, xi). Here the SCLC started the Chicago Freedom movement in 1965 with a local Chicago group, with a goal of ending the slums in Chicago (Finley et al., 2015, 3). Starting a campaign in the North proved difficult,

however, in part because northern racism was less visible and more intricate, and because this part of the US saw itself as already free from racism (Dyson, 2001, 36-38; Finley et al., 2015, xi). Reactions to actions organised by the SCLC were seen by King as the most “hostile and hateful” shows of racism he had seen, and he suffered a number of small set-backs during this campaign. Overall, the combination of “Northern racism and black demoralization brought out the worst in King’s strategies, bitterly reversing the usual success of his campaigns” (Dyson, 2001, 37-38).

Following this, King “accused Northern Whites of practicing ‘psychological and spiritual genocide’” and “cultural homicide” through making Black people’s contribution to the U.S invisible, which was a drastic change from his earlier rhetoric of appealing to the conscience of white people (Dyson, 2001, 37-38, 113). While King’s changed rhetoric was in line with a growth in black nationalism and the Black Panther movement in the US, this still meant that the strategies and approaches of the Chicago Freedom Movement seemed out-dated to many (Finley et al., 2015, 7). During this time, King maintained his commitment to nonviolent resistance, but did come to understand better the arguments against a philosophy of conversion and forgiveness of whites (Dyson, 2001, 112). He also moved away from previous judgement of Black Americans in the North as apathetic and gained more empathy after witnessing the “hopelessness” in the ghettos (*ibid*).

The Chicago Freedom Movement came to a formal end in 1967 when the local Chicago group was dissolved (Finley et al., 2015, 6). Although this later part of King’s career is far less known and admired than the Southern campaigns, and sometimes dismissed as a side-note and a failure, Finley et al. (*ibid*, xii, 3-5) argue that the Chicago Freedom Movement was “a crucial part of King’s life” and the long-term impacts of his work and the American struggle for racial justice, as well as an “experiment in nonviolence that is relevant to students and practitioners of nonviolence today”.

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, an event which was monumental in the US and the rest of the world, but especially in the Black community in the US (Dyson, 2001, 1-3). Following King’s death, a struggle broke out over King’s legacy as either a “radical incendiary”, or the moderate civil rights champion “appealing to the nation’s highest ideals” (Jackson, 2009, 359). Ultimately, the American hero narrative became dominant in public discourse, as evidenced for example by the marking of King’s birthday as a national holiday in the US (Jackson, 2009, 360).

Violence and pragmatism

While the three nonviolent movements outlined above are meaningfully different from violent resistance in their use of methods, this does not mean that the resistance movements existed in a nonviolent sphere free of all forms and influences of violence. Some of the ways in which violence occurred and played a role in the movements will be discussed in the following section. In addition, the section will discuss the question of whether the movements were shaped by pragmatic or principled nonviolence, as these two questions are at times closely related.

Firstly, it is worth emphasising the role that pragmatic reasoning played within these movements and leaders when choosing nonviolent resistance, even while also putting forth strong moral arguments against violent struggle. As Fredrickson (1995, 225-226) argues, “[n]onviolent actions do not necessarily signify a nonviolent ideology”, and even principled arguments for nonviolence may have a “practical function” of increasing “the morale and motivation of nonviolent protesters” and inhibit the outbreak of violence. Gandhi is a good example of the at times complicated overlap or symbiosis between principles and pragmatism, being portrayed in different accounts both as a morally convinced pacifist, and a pragmatic strategist of nonviolence rejected by “genuine” pacifists (Benjamin, 1973, 197; Isserman, 1986, 48; Satha-Anand, 2015, 298; Sharp, 1959, 42). In fact, Gandhi himself presented arguments for both points of view (Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 114; McLauchlan, 2016, 432; Satha-Anand, 2015, 292-293; Terchek, 2000, 3). In the South African anti-apartheid movement, pragmatic considerations around the choice of violent or nonviolent methods were widespread and dominant, both among the grassroots membership and leadership (Presbey, 2006, 151). When Albert Luthuli, the President of the ANC at the time, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1961, he echoed this sentiment in a newspaper interview where he said that “I would not pigeon-hole myself as a pacifist ... But on practical consideration it would be suicidal in the circles today to abandon our policy of non-violence” (Simpson, 2018, 143). Finally, in the civil rights movement, there was an ongoing debate about the role and value of violence, both violent attacks but especially violent self-defence (Nimtz, 2016, 4). Although King always used strong moral rhetoric arguing for nonviolence, conversion, and forgiveness (Satha-Anand, 2015, 293), the brand of nonviolence used by him and the SCLC was extremely tactical in its nature, and this was a major part of their success (Nimtz, 2016, 2). Civil rights leaders working closely with King, such as other organisers of the Montgomery bus boycott, were not pacifists, nor willing to give up their right to

defend themselves (Kosek, 2005, 1343). In fact, as Kosek (*ibid*) writes, during the boycott, “[g]uns were everywhere, and black Montgomerians made no apologies for their defensive preparations” and King himself prepared for armed self-defence at the beginning of the Montgomery bus boycott (Fredrickson, 1995, 256).

Secondly, and related to the strategic nature of these nonviolent campaigns, violence played a role in the three movements because the extreme violence used against protesters became a major part of the movement dynamics, sometimes by backfiring for the opponent and having the effect of strengthening the resistance movement. This particular role of violence, and the backfire effect, is examined in more detail in Chapter Five. A number of the most iconic or famous instances of regime repression backfire happened during the three resistance movements discussed here, and these are a major part of the popular narrative around the movements and the history and power of nonviolence. The Amritsar massacre and Dharasana protest in India, the Sharpeville and Soweto shootings in South Africa, and the Birmingham and Selma campaigns in the US, all of which are mentioned in the previous sections, are particularly important historical examples of the backfire effect (Kosek, 2005, 1345; Mandela, 1994, 206; Martin, 2015, 146-148; Presbey, 2006, 153-154).

The events in Amritsar in 1919 and Dharasana in 1930 differed greatly in the reaction of the protesters, with participants in Amritsar attempting to run away from the protest once police opened fire, whereas protesters in Dharasana kept walking towards the police line as other protesters were beaten (Martin, 2015, 148-149; Presbey, 2006, 153-154). This, potentially, encapsulates some of the differences between Gandhi’s concepts of voluntary and involuntary suffering, which may explain his condemnation of the protesters in Amritsar for running away from, rather than towards, the bullets (Terchek, 2000, 183-184). In both cases, however, police violence against protesters was excessive and produced strong condemnations (Martin, 2015, 148-149; Presbey, 2006, 153-154). Given that Gandhi himself admitted that a large proportion of the protesters in the Indian independence movement were not morally convinced of nonviolence, but merely followed strict nonviolence because of “the insistence of their leaders”, as well as because of a lack of weapons, the idea that the suffering endured was voluntary, even in Dharasana, is debatable (Fredrickson, 1995, 229; Presbey, 2006, 146). This less than full commitment to nonviolence was, however, sufficient for Gandhi, who did not want to wait for what he called “the perfect conditions” (Presbey, 2006, 146; Satha-Anand, 2015, 293). Gandhi’s approach to the

suffering of protesters, and the incomplete voluntariness of this, demonstrates, as Fredrickson (1995, 229) also argues, a “spiritually elitist argument” which reduces followers not to *satyagrahi* themselves, but rather “an army pledged and conditioned to follow the general even though they did not fully understand the cause for which they were fighting” – and perhaps also the consequences.

In contrast, the question of the suffering of protesters, the responsibility of organisers, and the possibility of alternative resistance methods which might decrease suffering were prominent in the South African anti-apartheid movement, and part of the reason for a turn to violent struggle. Following the events in Sharpeville and Soweto, and the widespread everyday violence against South Africans of colour – especially anti-apartheid activists – leaders of the anti-apartheid movement had since the early 1960s been questioning if they could defend imposing that degree of suffering and risk of dying on their followers (Seidman, 2000, 163-164). This question was intensified by the fact that within the wider anti-apartheid movement (although not with the direct involvement or approval of the ANC), reluctant citizens were at times pressured or forced into participating, as for example the PAC did before the protest at Sharpeville (Presbey, 2006, 162-163; Seidman 2000, 165-166). This question was brought to the forefront following the shooting of protesters in Bisho in 1992. After the shooting, both black anti-apartheid activists and conservatives blamed the activist organiser for his responsibility as well as blaming the guards who shot at protesters (Seidman, 2000, 161). This allocation of responsibility was because it was argued to not be unexpected that guards might react with excessive violence, and so, within the extremely violent and repressive context of South African apartheid, “the decision to place volunteers in the line of fire was widely viewed as irresponsible, perhaps murderous” (Seidman, 2000, 161).

The American civil rights struggle is especially known not just for the occurrence of violence against protesters, and this violence backfiring, but also for a form of nonviolent resistance which focused on provoking repression as one of its main features and ways to succeed (Kirk, 2004, 89; Nimitz, 2016, 2; Satha-Anand, 2015, 294-295). The strategy included gaining the “moral highground” through nonviolent discipline, and this was most effective when met with extreme and well-documented violence, often with the aim of achieving federal action and intervention (Nimitz, 2016, 2). In the case of the civil rights movement, it is worth noting the explicit attempt to provoke opponents into “blatant, public brutality” (Nimitz, 2016, 2; Satha-Anand, 2015, 294). The

recruitment of high school students in Birmingham exemplifies this tactic, since especially the images of children being beaten and placed in jail resulted in even stronger reactions across the US than when the same was done to adult protesters (Gross, 2018, 321). In April 1963, when a group of young Black protesters were attacked by the police and police dogs, SCLC organisers at the headquarters were “elated because the police had been provoked into creating an incident that supplied press coverage for the protest”, repeating to each other “We’ve got a movement. We had some police brutality. They brought out the dogs. We’ve got a movement” (Satha-Anand, 2015, 294).

Another and very direct way in which violence played a role in these movements is through the occurrence of armed struggle. Although there are arguments that armed struggle was more important to the Indian independence movement than what is commonly recognised (McQuade, 2016), the focus here is on South Africa and the US. While in the US the relationship between violent and nonviolent resistance is perhaps more complicated, in the case of South Africa, the turn to violent resistance was openly embraced by anti-apartheid activists (e.g. Tutu in Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, xii). However, the approach to violent struggle highlights a strong focus on principles of minimising harm and preserving human life, thereby referring back to the theme of principles and pragmatism in the movements. Importantly, the preservation of life was both in terms of not targeting white South Africans, and in terms of attempting to minimise deaths and harm from regime repression in the Black community (Presbey, 2006, 143; Seidman, 2000, 164). To this effect, Mandela stated to a British journalist in 1961 that “[t]here are many people who feel that it is useless and futile for us to continue talking peace and nonviolence against a government whose reply is only savage attacks on an unarmed and defenceless people. And I think the time has come for use to consider, in the light of our experiences in the stay-at-home, whether the methods which we have applied so far are adequate” (Madrigal, 2013). It is important to note here that Mandela did not argue that extreme state repression makes nonviolence fully useless; rather, he consistently claims that the combination of violent and nonviolent means, which was the method used by the ANC, was what brought a resolution to the anti-apartheid struggle (Presbey, 2006, 143). Finally, ANC leaders argued that the “agonizing” decision to embrace violent resistance with the establishment of MK was in part an attempt to “control and direct the various violent movements springing up” (Presbey, 2006, 151, 156).

The American civil rights movement demonstrates a further nuancing of the at times symbiotic relationship between violent and nonviolent movements. The violent and nonviolent civil rights movements are often portrayed as distinct groups, often even opposing because of their different choice of methods, with King and Malcolm X as the peaceful and loving and violent and vengeful leader respectively (Whitlock, 1996, 289-290). However, the success of the civil rights struggle was arguably exactly because both these movements existed and interacted with each other (Nimtz, 2016). The nonviolent civil rights movement gained influence with the federal government in part because of the threat of violent uprisings, both from more organised violent groups such as the Black Panthers and Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, and because there was not full adherence to nonviolent discipline in all nonviolent protests, and a fear that this would escalate further (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 10; Nimtz, 2016, 8-9). An example of this was the end of the Birmingham campaign, where a Kennedy administration representative in Birmingham warned the president of an increasing danger of violence, leading the Attorney General to speak directly with one of the organisers of the campaign on the phone to secure an agreement (Nimtz, 2016, 8). King himself used this dynamic well and positioned his civil rights movement as an alternative to the violent campaign, emphasising to the US government that it was either his movement or the Nation of Islam and violent resistance (*ibid*, 7). Another central actor who recognised, and used, this dynamic, was Malcolm X himself, who although he would often attack King in public as “an Uncle Tom”, met King’s wife Coretta Scott King in Selma while King was in prison (Dyson, 2001, 30, 110-111). Malcolm X had flown in to give a speech to the SNCC, and said to Coretta King that “I want Dr. King to know that I didn’t come to Selma to make his job difficult ... I really did come thinking that I could make it easier. If the white people realize what the alternative is, perhaps they will be more willing to hear Dr. King” (quoted in Dyson, 2001, 30, italics removed).

Lone male hero syndrome

A recurring narrative around these three famous nonviolent movements and within nonviolence traditions is that of the importance of the charismatic leader, or lone male hero of nonviolence (Fredrickson, 1995, 230). This theme becomes relevant to subsequent chapters, in part as an idea of respectability in resistance movements, as well as discussions around internal dynamics and hierarchies of nonviolent movements. Within this narrative, the movements are largely defined,

directed, and established by this one leader, or at times with the added nuance of another charismatic figure, for example Nehru as the apprentice, Tutu as the co-organiser of racial justice, and Malcolm X as the hateful, violent counterpart (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 90-91). The imagery of the lone male hero or genius runs through a number of fields, such as film and media, and technology and science (e.g. Burton, 2017; Rohn, 2017; Smil, 2011). This narrative of the importance or necessity, of a perfect or superior charismatic leader effects not only popular perceptions of past movements such as these, which works to hide the importance of the work of others in the movements, but also perceptions of future strategies and possibilities, since these are shaped by past success stories.

Gandhi, Mandela, and King are all extraordinarily popular figures, not only within social movements, but also in wider society. A manifestation of this is the use of their images, as well as actual or misattributed quotes, for commercial purposes, nationalist projects, conservative political causes, popular mobilisation attempts, resistance movements' printed materials, etc. (Dyson, 2001, 6; Finley et al., 2015, 6; Mishra, 2018; Shillam, 2018). This is a strong manifestation of the cult of personality surrounding these figures, as is the making and popularity of blockbuster films about them (*Gandhi* in 1982, *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom* in 2013, and *Selma* in 2014). The cult of personhood was also traced in the introduction to this chapter, which demonstrated examples of protests imitating, or claiming to carry on, the actions of the three leaders.

Gandhi himself attributed great importance to his role as a leader, and to using himself and his own life as central to mobilising a resistance movement in India (Fredrickson, 1995, 230). He was highly successful in this attempt at creating a strong personal following, with "his dress, language, mode of public speaking, food, bodily gestures, ways of sitting ... humour, and staff" all becoming symbols of the way of life and method of resistance that he was recruiting for (Gandhi, 2007/1909, 125; Gandhi and Parel, 1997, 68-69, 97; Parekh, 1997, 9; Terchek, 2000, 3). In this manner, Gandhi effectively turned himself into the perfect lone, heroic leader of a movement of people seeking a superior – perhaps almost superhuman – way of life (McLaughlan, 2016, 433). The influence of this on subsequent movements is evident in the call for a "new Gandhi" in both South Africa and the US during the struggles covered in this chapter, in order to both mobilise support and secure nonviolent discipline, calls which Gandhi himself put forward as advice (Fredrickson, 1995, 230, 232).

King, like Gandhi, believed in the importance of charismatic leaders to build and maintain a

movement. King solidified his own status as one such leader when, for example, he failed to credit other organisers sufficiently, especially women, as with the Montgomery bus boycott, and also when he did not admit the extent to which his writings and speeches were collaborative works (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 34-35; Dyson, 2001, 297-298). The personal reputation and influence of King as the charismatic leader of the civil rights movement is so strong that proclamations of his genius border on descriptions of a perfect person (Dyson, 2001, 303). This personal influence was so significant that an SNCC communications director explained that “We would sometimes ask King to go to some place, because we knew the attention he drew would be helpful to the local scene, even if it wasn’t helpful to us” (quoted in Kirk, 2004, 125). It was King’s talent as an orator which formed the basis of the extraordinary focus on his person as almost an embodiment of the civil rights movement, a rhetoric which “comports well with America’s romanticized conception of the selfless hero who arrives in the nick of time to save the community from whatever evil it faces” (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 1). King’s sermonic style of speaking was closely influenced by his background as a church minister, and his leadership in the civil rights movement enacted, in a sense, “the traditional role of the black preacher in African-American history” (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 6). This is part of what Edwards (2012, xv) describes as “one of the central fictions of black American politics: that freedom is best achieved under the direction of a single charismatic leader”. To contradict this fiction, Fredrickson (1995, 253) writes that “recent historians of the American civil rights movement of 1955-1965 have shown that it sprang from no single ideological or organizational source and was certainly not the creation of one great man”.

Finally, Nelson Mandela eventually became this charismatic leader in the anti-apartheid movement, especially in the eyes of the international community which centered solidarity campaigns around the call to “Free Mandela” (Lodge, 2006, x; Wilkinson, 2013). The intense focus on Mandela’s person is evident in research and historical literature, which contains analysis of not only his life but also in-depth discussions of his personal characteristics as uniquely important to the anti-apartheid struggle (e.g. Lieberfeld, 2003; Lodge, 2006; Simpson, 2018). Lodge (2006, ix-x, 84-85) argues that this status as charismatic leader was at least in part cultured and established by Mandela himself, along with close allies, and that his background gave him not only “an unusual assurance about his destiny as a leader”, but also tools to achieve this. They (ibid, xi) argue further

that Mandela consistently treated politics as “primarily about enacting stories ... about exemplary conduct and only secondarily about ideological vision”. An important part of the mythology around Mandela – and important to the theme of this thesis – is his short-lived role as commander of the armed wing of ANC, along with his long imprisonment (Lodge, 2006, ix-x; Seidman, 2000, 165). Further highlighting the strongly symbolic role of the MK, this commandship strengthened the symbolism around Mandela in his “messianic leadership role”, as Mandela and his comrades in the MK used this to establish their political legitimacy and “engender hopes among their compatriots that salvation would be achieved through their own heroic self-sacrifice” (Lodge, 2006, ix). Although this particular enactment of heroic leadership may seem only relevant exactly to violent resistance, Chapter Five will argue that the nonviolent concept of self-sacrifice or voluntary suffering can serve a very similar purpose.

The intense focus on charismatic leaders can have a number of effects for both the resistance movement in question, historical accounts of the movement, and nonviolent resistance theory. An obvious consequence is the erasure or marginalisation of other people’s work and its importance to the success of a movement. King, for example, would at times gloss over the work of other civil rights activists in the campaigns he was part of (Dyson, 2001, 297-298). This led to criticism from allies of King’s such as the SNCC and some local organisers. The SNCC were frustrated that King regularly failed to give credit to activists and movements who had been organising for a long time in the places he went to “stir things up” (*ibid*, 297). King’s model of social change was seen as “camera-hogging” and putting him and the SCLC above local activists and populations (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 45-46; Dyson, 2001, 297). Another form of work which is erased – excluding that conducted by activists in the movement – is the work *outside* of the movement that is, in fact, integral to a resistance movement by enabling leaders and activists to continue their resistance work. South African activist Emma Mashinini pointed out as much in an interview with Sutherland and Meyer (2000, 172) when discussing the absurdity of missing the importance of women’s work at home. As Mashinini asked:

Can you imagine that when Nelson Mandela and Sisulu came out of prison, they did not wander in the streets, they went back to their homes – homes that had been maintained by women. They went back to their homes and found their children educated (quoted in Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 172).

Another possible consequence of the charismatic leader myth is a weakening of resistance movements through a lack of focus on building leadership and decision-making structures within the movement, and the risk that a movement fails if a charismatic leader turns out to be less than perfect. Ella Baker, an SCLC organiser who was instrumental in starting the SNCC and became an organiser there instead, was a vocal critic of King, the intense personal focus on him, and its effects on the movement. In contrast to King's style, Baker's focus was on empowering individuals and communities to make their own change, arguing that King failed "to nurture leadership in others", thus creating an "unhealthy dependence" typical of traditional leadership models (Dyson, 2001, 297). Baker argued that because leaders of movements are typically made leaders when they "found a spot in the public limelight", this means that "the media made him, and the media may undo him" and this is especially risky if both the leader and others believe that the leader "is the movement" (quoted in Dyson, 2001, 297). Based on her scepticism of charismatic leadership models, Baker tried to convince King to resist the "cult of personality" around him as early as in Montgomery, but did not succeed (Dyson, 2001, 298; Finley et al., 2015, ix-xi).

Although nonviolence theorists argue at times that a focus on nonviolent civil resistance through history does, precisely, go "beyond the Great Man theory of political change" (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 340), the argument here is the opposite: that nonviolence theory and historical accounts of iconic nonviolence movements do not avoid this problem. Although this issue does not just apply to a single account of nonviolent resistance, or to views of the past, but rather the wider field including today, it is worth noting that some critiques are made of Gene Sharp as an example of a theorist who "replaced the heroism of male physicality with the heroism of the wise counsellor or strategist who was usually assumed to be a man" (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 343). A number of consequences of this narrative have been discussed here. Another more broad consequence is the risk of a belief that "nonviolence could not succeed elsewhere unless it had an equally virtuous and charismatic leader" (Fredrickson, 1995, 230). As Edwards (2012, xxi-xxii) points out, this consequence was clear in American politics, in which "[t]hroughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, public culture bemoaned the black leadership void and presumed the natural and inevitable necessity of singular, male charismatic leadership for African American political and social advancement". Therefore, actively and directly calling into question the "myth – or *fiction* – that charismatic leadership is a necessary precondition for social change, political access, and historical

progress” (Edwards, 2012, xviii) becomes crucial.

Specificity versus universalism

While Gandhi’s practice and teaching of nonviolence are often treated as universally valid and applicable, they are in fact specific to the cultural, social, and religious context in which they were developed. Baldoli (2019, 4-5) complicates the assumption of universalism further by arguing that Gandhi’s concepts were not in fact universalised, but merely Westernised; that is, Gandhi’s conception of nonviolence faced “the reduction of its meaning to terms belonging to the Western tradition”. This was part of the initial reason why Gandhi started using the term *satyagraha*. Even this term, however, has since become an international “conceptual shorthand” for nonviolent mass action, despite the naming’s explicit emphasis on the particular context of Gandhi’s nonviolence (Baldoli, 2019, 5; McLaughlan, 2016, 431-432). Other central concepts in Gandhi’s framework, such as *dharma*, *himsa*, and *ahimsa* are taken from Hindu world views, although all with a degree of reinterpretation by Gandhi (Terchek, 2000, 186, 191). However, despite this explicit rooting of nonviolence in Indian civilisation, Gandhi still remained committed to spreading *satyagraha* as a global and universal idea (Fredrickson, 1995, 227-228), thus encompassing the tension between specificity and universalism within his own thinking as well.

The universality of “Gandhian nonviolence” is at times suggested through the emphasis on the link between South Africa and Gandhi (Fredrickson, 1995, 227; Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, 160). However, as Sutherland and Meyer (2000, 18) point out, although inspiration from Gandhi was influential in the anti-apartheid movement, there are also a number of nonviolent characteristics to be found throughout African history that influenced the movement, much of which is ignored. An example of this is the concept of Ubuntu, explained by Desmond Tutu as a “uniquely African” term which “speaks about gentleness, hospitality, putting yourself out on behalf of others, being vulnerable”, and “embraces both compassion and toughness” (in Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, xi). What is further important, especially in the context of *Ubuntu* as a base for South African nonviolence, is that the term goes beyond discussing “short-term strategies and tactics, which too often divide progressive people”, and points to a “larger struggle” than that between violent and nonviolent struggle, that of fighting united for “economic justice, for true freedom and equality, and for a world of lasting peace” (Tutu in Sutherland and Meyer, 2000, xi). By emphasising the concept

of *Ubuntu*, Tutu is then suggesting that the more important cause, which as he sees it should unite progressive struggles, is not between violent and nonviolent methods, but for a world with less violence.

The role of the Youth League of the ANC is important to the history of the anti-apartheid struggle, in part because it was the Youth League which originally pushed for more confrontational civil disobedience in the early days of the ANC, and later for the establishment of an armed wing (Fredrickson, 1995, 241; Presbey, 2006, 150). However, the Youth League was noteworthy for another focus of theirs, which was to establish a specific bond between black South Africans through “espous[ing] a mystical Africanist philosophy that anticipated the later Pan-Africanist and Black Consciousness movements” (Fredrickson, 1995, 241). Further, although the Youth League’s suggested programme for mass nonviolent action when they suggested this was highly similar to Gandhi’s program and model, it makes no mention of Gandhi or the earlier Indian passive resistance campaign in South Africa (*ibid*, 242-243). This was because – rather ironically – the ANC Youth League did take on one central lesson from Gandhi, which was one of “turning nonviolent struggle into a question of authenticity and rebuilding ‘noble’ civilisations” meaning that for the ANC, their methods could not be seen to be based off the Indian movement (*ibid*, 243). However, the Youth League leaders eventually decided to abandon this attempt to create an “original Africanist nationalism” in order to encourage Indians, whites, and other South Africans who wanted to support the struggle to join (*ibid*, 243).

Similarly, the role of black nationalism in the US highlights the importance of context, rootedness, and specificity in these movements. Although King was and is famous for preaching an ideal of universal brotherhood, Dyson (2001, 104) argues that in the last years of his life, “King embraced powerful dimensions of enlightened black nationalist thought”. Black nationalism, unlike King’s civil rights struggle against Southern Jim Crow laws, sprung from ghettos in Northern American states, as a strategy for defining a sense of authenticity to “resist the definition of blackness by whites or bourgeois blacks” (*ibid*, 105-106). Malcolm X presented a highly elaborate version of this black nationalism, in which “black self-determination” meant “self-creation”, leading to “economic control, cultural recreation, social cohesion, spiritual rebirth, psychic regeneration, and racial unity” (*ibid*, 111). The difference between the two approaches can also be seen in the conceptions of ‘equality’ which, once again, span ideas of universalism or specificity. In his rhetoric,

King was highly successful in presenting the idea of equality as fundamental to American society, and through that the struggle for racial equality as an essentially American project, a universalising struggle for the betterment of all of society (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 87-103; Hooker, 2016, 457).

As Hooker (2016, 457) argues, this framing places the civil rights struggle as fitting into “a specific liberal understanding of both racism and US democracy” that could be called “the perfectibility of US democracy thesis”. According to this thesis or narrative, “political relations among citizens are constantly moving in a more egalitarian direction, and gradual progress toward racial justice is thus inevitable and natural” and the image of Martin Luther King Jr., is a central part of this narrative (*ibid*). In contrast to this, Malcolm X in his black nationalist ideology used the concept of equality to represent “a commitment to a relationship of equivalence between two or more clearly separate entities, each of which possesses its own independent identity but was similarly powerful” (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 92-93). The dominance of King’s universalising call for equality leads not only to a simplified popular narrative of King as “the primary leader of the civil rights movement and the savior of racial justice” against Malcolm X as the “radical advocate of black supremacy and racial violence” (*ibid*, 90-91), but also adds to the “romantic narrative of the civil rights movement” which works to “downplay the more radical aspects” and the diversity of perspectives within the movement (Hooker, 2016, 457).

Through universalising narratives, figures such as Gandhi, King, and Mandela can then become not only charismatic heroes of the movements they were part of, but also of the idea of nonviolent resistance as such, as well as within the collective memories of the countries in which they were active. Such figures are then not merely remembered as effective rebels or outsiders who embody breaking the rules when the rules are unjust; they have also become emblematic of the very countries, and the very systems, that they resisted, and a sign of the ‘inevitable’ progress towards equality within these self-proclaimed progressive and enlightened societies (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 1).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline of the main events, thoughts, and practices of the three major nonviolent histories of the independence struggle in India, the anti-apartheid struggle in South

Africa, and the civil rights struggle in the US. The chapter has emphasised both the main influences that these movements have had on nonviolence theory and literature, but also in the subsequent section the nuances and complications to this, such as the role of pragmatism, violence, and charismatic leadership myths. What this illustrates is that although these movements were in meaningful ways nonviolent, this does not mean the absence of violence; this understanding of nonviolence runs throughout the thesis and forms the main line of inquiry. It is, then, as others who have nuanced these narratives before have also argued, not an attempt to argue against the use of these histories for lessons and inspiration for nonviolent campaigns and politics, but rather, an attempt to learn not just from the successes and virtues, but also from the failures, prejudice, coercion and problematic attitudes that can also be observed (see for example Mishra, 2018; Seidman, 2000, 166). As Seidman (2000, 166) argues, rather than denying the existence of a category of social movements that could be called ‘nonviolent’, or denying the normative claims of nonviolence theory because of this, a critical and nuanced approach to nonviolence history can “underscore the problems inherent in grading political protest against an absolutist scorecard on which violence and nonviolence are seen as pure and distinct categories”. The histories of these, and other, nonviolent movements are then not only important because of what happened, and what the literature can draw from that when creating theories of nonviolent resistance; they are also important in the sense of how they are remembered and retold in the literature, the narratives or popular perceptions of them (as Frankel (2001, 17) also argues with regards to the Sharpeville massacre).

What these histories do show is, firstly, that the idea of what it means to be nonviolent can change. Whereas for Gandhi, for example, “nonviolence” meant no engagement with direct violence and an extreme call for sacrifice from resisters, in South Africa, the concept of being nonviolent also meant that if violence was going to break out, a nonviolent leader felt compelled to control and direct this as much as possible, and that a nonviolent movement had a responsibility to protect their own participants as well as opponents. Secondly, the histories have shown that violence will, in some way, play a role in the dynamics of a nonviolent movement. In South Africa, it did so most directly through a direct combination of methods; in the US, violence worked in the nonviolent dynamic both as an implicit (and sometimes explicit) threat of violence breaking out if nonviolent movements were not successful, and as the go-to methods for especially King and the

SCLC to gain national attention and push for federal intervention; whereas in India, violence played a role, as in the US, through building attention and sympathy when nonviolent protesters were exposed to extreme violence. These themes will be explored further in the following chapters.

On their own, the themes of leadership and universalism are relevant to the question of violence in nonviolent movements in a number of ways. The lone male hero narrative can be related to this through two main avenues. Firstly, this is a narrative quite clearly taken from a hierarchical, militaristic view of organisations and political change, prevalent in armed struggle, in which the hero narrative is imperative. This legacy is certainly not new for nonviolence theory, which quite readily admits to taking lessons from military warfare, and to being a method of war through different means, as shown in Chapter Two. Secondly, the tendency to view organisations through this lens undermines democratic organisation, and diversity in the movement, but especially in leadership roles, as Ella Baker for example critiqued (Dyson, 2001, 297). Through this, prejudice, inequality, silencing, and repression can be reproduced within nonviolent movements. The importance of this to nonviolence theory is discussed and demonstrated in subsequent chapters. The issue of specificity versus universalism is important to understanding better the applicability of nonviolence lessons across contexts, where factors such as the repressiveness of the opponent, inequality in the wider society – and through that within the movement – and the role of othering through the creation of a community in the nonviolence movement, are all crucial to gain a better understanding of. What this section demonstrated is, in essence, that context does matter, and that it can be problematic and/or ineffective, and risk perpetuating violence unnecessarily, if tactics, lessons, and thoughts from one nonviolent movement are transferred uncritically to another.

In an almost circular fashion, this final tension of specificity and universalism brings the discussion back to the importance of nuancing these histories. What the lesson of specificity shows from these three movements is, that “collective identity” is crucial to resistance movements, since it can bring people in to the movement and maintain their engagement with the resistance, especially “when a movement’s ultimate goal ... seems distant and while autocracy and repression persist” (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 32; Samuel, 2013, 397). The attempt to create a global, nonviolent imagined community, which cuts across local traditions of *both* violent and nonviolent resistance, differences in government repression, different degrees of economic inequality as well as different degrees of prejudice, can arguably be seen in these popular narratives of polished, universally

appealing heroes of a global and unlimited nonviolence and respect for all. The components of tactics and action and “texts, narratives, and discourse” are some of the main parts of collective identity formation (Bartkowski ed, 2013, 39). An example of this was provided by the *Break Free* and Campaign Nonviolence protests described at the beginning of this chapter, in which the actions of the present protesters incorporated important texts, anthems, and symbols from nonviolent movements of the past, resulting in a process of collective identity formation within a tradition of nonviolent resistance perceived as coherent and universal. Smithey (in Bartkowski ed, 2013, 39) writes of these actions intended to create or demonstrate collective identity that “[e]xperienced organizers make sure that the symbolism of a collective action is not lost on the media”, emphasising the importance of the performative aspect of collective identity, for example, the “performing” of nonviolence in order to join the “nonviolent movement”.

Following on from these themes and discussions, the next chapter will discuss the concept of violence in depth in order to establish the argument that violence is a highly complex, multi-dimensional, and dynamic concept. The chapter will not attempt to arrive at one definition of violence – just as the literature review did not attempt to arrive at one definition of nonviolence – but will provide an overview of some of the different definitions, principles for defining violence, as well as some major dividing lines between different understandings of violence.

Chapter Four: The Concept of Violence

Although the concept and definition of violence is to some extent acknowledged as relevant to the study and practice of nonviolent resistance, the difficulties of drawing a line between violence and nonviolence are not fully explored – and this leads to a number of issues. While some recent work argues that the relationship between violence and nonviolence has been sufficiently explored in the literature, and any further focus on this is unnecessary (Baldoli, 2019, 8-9), the argument here is the exact opposite; both because this relationship has not been thoroughly explored in the literature, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, and because a definitive and final definition of violence is not possible, as will be demonstrated in this chapter. Therefore, a need to continuously discuss and think about this relationship arises. Having said that, Baldoli (*ibid*, 8) is certainly right to argue that not every interrogation of the concept of nonviolence has to start with discussing the concept of violence – precisely because a definition of violence will not be settled on, and consequently, waiting for this before being able to discuss nonviolence would be obsolete. What the analysis of violence and nonviolence here does share with Baldoli (*ibid*, 9) is the scepticism about analysing the two concepts as “opposites”. Rather than arguing that violence must be defined in order to define nonviolence as the opposite of this – or everything not violent – this thesis argues that the concept of violence needs to be investigated because it is part of nonviolent resistance in important ways, is the context for nonviolent resistance, and at the same time is still what nonviolent resistance seeks to avoid.

Violence is, as will be demonstrated in this chapter, a vague and complex term. Stanko (ed, 2003, 2), for example, writes that “[d]espite an assumed, almost self-evident core, ‘violence’ as a term is ambiguous and its usage is in many ways moulded by different people as well as by different social scientists to describe a whole range of events, feelings and harm” (see also for example Harris, 1974, 215; Lawrence and Karim eds, 2007, 106). Despite this fact, much research within different fields, including statistical data analysis on violence tends to rely on an assumption that “everyone interprets the incident, the act, or the question in the same way” as either violent or not violent (Triplett et al., 2016, 332). This assumption can also, as demonstrated in the literature review, be traced through the field of nonviolent resistance studies. What is often thought of as the agreed upon definition of violence is what Harris (1974, 215) calls the obvious cases of violence such as “rape, murder, fire and sword paradigm which involves the sudden, forceful, and perhaps

unexpected, infliction of painful physical injury upon an unwilling victim”.

In general politics as well, violence is an essential, and highly contested concept, and an effective way to raise the importance of a political problem: if it is violent, it is often taken more seriously than if it is simply “wrong”. Harris (1974, 213, 219) talks of the “rhetorical force” that the term violence has, one which leads in political discussions of violence to an “unwillingness of the various parties to renounce the right to use one of the most powerful terms of political rhetoric”. This is linked to a certain “popularised notion” of violence as including “two prominent players – one an evil perpetrator, the other an innocent victim” (Stanko ed, 2003, 4). What this notion does in politics is relegate violence to be something which “bad” people or citizens do, and not a normal presence in society. This is an extremely purist conception of violence, as it functions to create a perceived “pure” society of good people, who just need to figure out what to do with the few “bad”, violent people in it. Such a notion is so powerful that Stanko (*ibid*) recounts how, even when researchers were working on a project to challenge this notion, they were constantly having to deal with media interest in the research, which attempted to spin the research findings into ones that fit the popular narrative of an evil perpetrator and an innocent victim.

The political importance of not only understanding individual and societal perceptions of violence, but also understanding the role that assumptions about violence within research play in politics is then crucial. Several historical examples demonstrate the influence that researchers can have on public opinion and policy by defining a problem as “violence”; this was a factor in raising opinions against for example child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence, and so on (Triplett et al., 2016, 347). Conversely, if research condones violence, or does not describe acts of force as violence, then “the fundamental assumption of learning theory is that definitions approving violence will lead to violence” (*ibid*, 334). Therefore:

When researchers study violence, it is important that they remember that their own operationalization will have implications for the extent of the phenomenon uncovered, the causes of the phenomenon, and the consequences of the behavior. In addition, these operationalizations will affect how violence is constructed by consumers of the research (Triplett et al., 2016, 347).

Personal bias is especially important for a field of research such as civil resistance studies, in

which there is a strong connection between researchers/theorists and consumers of the research. As shown in the literature review, research on nonviolence involves a more or less explicit understanding or definition of violence as well. This means that the effects of how researchers conceptualise violence will firstly define to what extent violence is seen to play a role in nonviolent movements (a broader definition will most likely mean that more violence is seen to occur), and secondly it will influence strongly how nonviolent activists and practitioners themselves conceptualise violence. As researchers “are people too”, the bias and variation in individual understandings of violence are, as well as “hegemonic processes that influence” how people view the world, also relevant to the process of using a working definition (assumed or stated) of violence in research (Aune, 2011, 429; Triplett et al., 2016, 333-334, 347; a discussion example of this can be found in Stanko ed, 2003, 3).

The approach of this chapter, and thesis, is the same as in for example Stanko’s (ed, 2003, 3) study of violence in the United Kingdom, which is the approach that “what violence means will always be fluid, not fixed; it is mutable”. The approach to dealing with this conception of violence is to discuss instead “theories of violence [which] must be as varied as the practices within which they occur” (Lawrence and Karim eds, 2007, 7). Following from this approach, this chapter is interdisciplinary, drawing on a number of fields which all add to the study of violence, such as criminology, sociology, philosophy, political theory, and, of course, nonviolent resistance literature. While some of these are broader in their application, some add to specific aspects of violence, such as criminology, which is mainly focused on interpersonal violence. Sociology adds significantly to the study of violence in relation to social structures, as well as to the social construction of different conceptions of violence which are then made to be seen as normal or universal. Political theories, such as feminism, have worked to highlight previously overlooked forms of violence – and with that have had a more openly normative approach – such as intimate partner violence and sexual assault.

In addition, this chapter goes beyond the common visualisation of different definitions of violence as mapped on a spectrum ranging from narrow to broad definitions (for example Vinthagen, 2015, 65; Galtung, 1969, 168), and argues instead that viewing definitions as reducible to one single spectrum is overly simplistic and does not capture the different ways in which a definition of violence might be considered “narrow” or “broad”. Instead, it presents a number of definitional lines, categories, and spectrums, which overlap and interact with each other. This lack

of clear separations is not a mistake or inaccuracy as much as it is a reflection of the complexity of how violence works in the world. The conclusion of this chapter will summarise the key points about the conceptualisation and definition of violence, as well as determine possible implications for nonviolence theory.

Material and non-material definitions of violence

A fundamentally important dividing line between different definitions of violence is that between material and non-material definitions of violence. For this chapter and thesis, these two categories of violence will both appear in discussions of other and definitional boundaries. However, the dividing line is of key importance, mainly because in many theories of violence, only material or physical harm qualifies as violence (e.g. Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 10), and the expansion of violence to include non-physical harm is highly contested, including in academic discussions and projects on the topic (e.g. Nimni, 2017; Stanko, 2003, 7).

Non-material definitions of violence are definitions which see harm other than physical or bodily harm as a possible foundation for classifying an act as violent. Material definitions, in contrast, limit conceptions of violence to consequences of physical or bodily harm. This definition of violence is, despite the constant widening of the literature and thinking on non-material definitions, still the most commonly used, especially in discussions which do not explicitly discuss how to define violence. Much of the nonviolent resistance literature covered in the literature review falls under this (e.g. Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013, 419). The division between material and non-material definitions of violence appears in different places throughout this thesis: for instance, many of the other categorisations and definitional lines discussed in the present chapter will encompass both categories, or will explicitly only be discussing one of these; additionally, the division is especially important, and explicitly discussed, in Chapter Six which discusses violence within nonviolent movements, and in which the question of whether non-material forms of harm qualify as violence is a point of contention within movements.

Justification as a definitional boundary

By using justification as a definitional boundary around violence, “violence” is defined or seen as unjustified causing of harm, whereas “force” or an equivalent term is used for harm caused with an

acceptable justification (Triplett et al., 2016, 332). As has been discussed previously in this thesis, there is a tendency to equate “violence” with “evil”, “bad” and so on (*ibid*), and so, the association between violence and a lack of justification is a common one. While this section will mainly discuss political or philosophical theories which make this distinction, it is worth noting that it is a commonly observed distinction employed by individuals when asked to rate an event as either violent or not violent, suggesting that the mechanisms behind this classification “extend beyond factors related to the nature of the act itself to include those factors that give the act meaning”, one of which is whether the action is seen as “necessary, good, and/or legitimate”, or “bad” (*ibid*, 333-336, 345).

The definitional line that relates to justification is important in two ways: in part because there are influential social, philosophical, and political theories of violence which employ this line; and in part because it seems to be a common bias in perception, and therefore, it should be assumed that this bias will influence the dominant views within social movements, communities, etc. These two parts are also related, however, since the creators of theories of violence are also, of course, individuals, and open to the same forms of bias (e.g., Lawrence and Karim eds, 2007, 10; Stanko, 2003, 3).

As mentioned, an often used term for a perceived good or justified act which includes the use of physical force or the causing of harm (and could therefore be labelled violent) is “force”. Gandhi (2007/1909, 120), for example, talks of this distinction when discussing an example of stopping a child from running towards a fire, saying that to “forcibly prevent” the child from doing so is “force of a different order” to violence. Through this example, Gandhi argues that the intention and consequence of using force determines whether or not the use of force is violent or not. In the example of the child and the fire, Gandhi (*ibid*) argues that “in thus preventing the child, you are minding entirely its own interest; you are exercising authority for its sole benefit”; however, the argument does not hold in arguments for using force/violence against the British in India, since when “using brute force against the English you consult entirely your own, that is the national, interest” (*ibid*). Although Gandhi does then use justification as a definitional boundary between violence and force, he is markedly different from most thinkers who do this, since his idea of justification is very narrow, and applies only when the personal or communal interests of the violent actor are completely removed from the scenario.

Other theories of violence, such as “Realist, behaviourist, and rational choice” theories,

explicitly deny the use of justification as a definitional boundary around violence (Baron et al., 2019, 201). These theories talk of concepts such as “deterrence and compellence to describe violence as a tool that is rationally wielded to achieve a desired end” (*ibid*). While the concept of “rational” actions is one with a number of connotations and theories attached to it, a minimum interpretation of this would presumably mean knowing the consequences of an action, both in terms of the chances of achieving the desired aim, and any possible side effects or collateral damage, as well as having an ability to balance the two.

Malcolm X is another example of the refusal to use justification as a definitional line between violence and force or not violence. Although he does advocate and justify violence in his speeches and writings, he never calls the actions anything other than violent. Arguing for what he calls the “uncompromising stance”, Malcolm X states that:

you should never be nonviolent unless you run into some nonviolence. I’m nonviolent with those who are nonviolent with me. But when you drop that violence on me, then you’ve made me go insane, and I’m not responsible for what I do ... Any time you know you’re within the law, within your legal rights, within your moral rights, in accord with justice, then die for what you believe in. But don’t die alone. Let your dying be reciprocal. This is what is meant by equality (Malcolm X, 2007/1964, 149)

Violence in this argument is then not necessarily justified in terms of an end, but rather in terms of its cause and the principle of equality; that is, violence may cause further violence, and the victim of the original violence is not to be blamed for their reaction.

Interpersonal, systemic, and structural violence

The discussion of the concept of violence in this chapter goes, as mentioned before, beyond the common depiction of violence definitions as fitting on a linear spectrum ranging from narrow to wide definitions. Instead, the argument is that the field of definitions of violence goes beyond this single line, and is comprised of a number of spectrums, definitional dividing lines, and categories of meanings of violence. The following section does, however, present a spectrum of sorts, by introducing firstly the concept of interpersonal violence as a relatively narrow conception of violence; secondly the concept of systemic violence, which broadens the scope of the context and

background structures that are relevant to make sense of individual acts of violence; and thirdly the concept of structural violence, which is a broad conception of violence in which social, political, legal, and economic structures can be described as violent. Apart from sitting on the spectrum just defined, these three forms of violence span another spectrum which is the spectrum between material and non-material conceptions of violence; that is, both interpersonal, systemic, and structural violence can be either material or non-material.

Interpersonal violence

Interpersonal violence is violence committed by an identifiable individual actor (or group), usually towards an identifiable victim or victims. This definition of violence is a major category within several areas of study, such as criminology and sociology (Triplett et al., 2016, 334; Walby, 2013, 96). Interpersonal violence is also the form of violence most commonly thought of and used to mean violence if nothing else is specified, both in general usage and research, perhaps because it is the most obvious occurrence of violence (Baron et al., 2019, 2000; Galtung, 1969, 173). Within the category of interpersonal violence, the definition can be material or non-material, and a number of other definitional lines can be drawn within this broad category (sometimes called simply personal violence (e.g., Galtung, 1969, 173)). Stanko (2003, 3) for example writes that their edited volume contains research which treats “[b]ullying, verbal abuse, physical harm, threats, intimidation and killing” all as instances of violence.

As this chapter demonstrates, considerable work has gone into theorising violence as a broader concept than the often implicitly defined idea of narrow, directly imposed physical harm; in contrast, Hannah Arendt spends time and analysis on elaborately and thoroughly drawing definitional lines around a narrow conception of violence, and distinguishing the phenomenon from concepts such as power, force, and authority (Arendt, 1970, 44-45). Importantly, she distinguishes power from violence, writing that while the "extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All. And this latter is never possible without instruments" (*ibid*, 42). In many ways, Arendt seems to present power and violence as contrasting phenomena, with power being held by collectives, while violence and strength is individual. An important point to make about violence is precisely the instrumentality inherent to the concept, since "the implements of violence, like all other tools, are designed and used for the purpose of multiplying natural strength" (*ibid*, 46). This, then, underlines the idea of violence as physical, as somatic incapacitation, whereas

many of the broader forms of violence are arguably, to Arendt, more a matter of the misuse of power. It also raises the possibility of popular rebellions against, say, a tyrannical state or leader, being about both power and violence, rather than just violence.

An important aspect of interpersonal violence, especially when conceived of as a random or not systemic form of violence, is its usage to delineate a perceived line between a “civilised society” and its “uncivilised outcasts”. That is, violent acts are used to create a sense of fear and threat, against which society – or the state – can protect through their monopoly on the use of force (Butler, 2020, 6). This is a sharp contrast to conceptions of violence which see the very structures of society and the state as inherently violent, meaning that violence is part of society, rather than a phenomenon which marks the boundary between society and “not society”. Stanko (ed, 2003, 4) writes, for example that “[t]here is a contradictory assumption that violence as a social phenomenon is a break from the presumed civilising progression of modernity”, meaning that an increase in violence - especially the forms of violence that spring from poverty - is seen as contradicting or undermining a narrative about the safety and progress of modern society. However, instead of addressing the inequality and poverty in this picture, Stanko (*ibid*) argues that “we prefer to pass laws [against these instances of violence] than to look carefully at how violence is so much welded to (often unequal) social relations”. Walby (2013, 104-105) argues how this narrative of violence as deviant personal acts on or around the margins of society can also be reproduced in academic discussions of violence. This is particularly an effect of bringing different conceptions of violence, such as interpersonal, systemic, and structural violence, too far apart in analysis. An example of this is when interpersonal violence is seen only through the lens of crime and therefore reserved for the field of criminology, at which part interpersonal crime and violence comes to be seen as “on the margins of society, deviance” rather than as a “part of structured social inequality” (*ibid*).

Private violence

The category of so-called private violence is perhaps one of the most contested ones within the study of violence. While the definitional line in question here - which is between categories typically called “public” and “private” violence - is not one which conceptualises “violence” on one side and “not violence” on the other, it does typically denote a sense of relevant/important violence versus irrelevant/less important violence (McAllister ed, 1982, 9-10). It is this hierarchy of relevance which

has been contested for decades, especially by the feminist movement, which famously declared that “the personal is political” (Hanisch, 1969; McAllister ed, 1982, 11). While this refrain started with the “second wave white” feminists who “addressed cisgender men’s violence against women as a system of oppression and not as a personal issue”, it has continued to be used by intersectional feminist approaches as well (Chen et al., 2016, xxvi-xxvii). In academia, this has produced a “growing body of scholarship focus[ing] attention on women’s experiences of violence in the home and in the public space, and the state’s responses to this” (Kaladelfos and Featherstone, 204, 233).

It is worth noting here that although discussions of what is political when it comes to instances of violence is discussed here, that does not equate to the category of “political violence” discussed later in the chapter, which is a narrower category defined by the aim of the violence, which has to be an identifiable political goal. Behind the statement that the personal is political is a challenge of the fact that so-called private violence is often relegated to a category of violence which does not matter to politics, political theory, or is at best less important than “public” or “political” violence, based on an idea of a public and a private sphere (McAllister ed, 1982, 9-10; Topper, 2001, 42). It is therefore important to note that even when discussions of these categories continue to use these terms, such as this thesis does, these should not be seen as ontological categories - that is what actually *can* be seen by the public, or what actually *is* political. Rather, they are socially constructed categories of what *should* be seen and what *should* matter politically.

Triplett et al. (2016, 338) illustrate this in their paper on individual perceptions of violence, writing that “[r]esearch on interpersonal violence indicates that people react less tolerantly to acts of force between strangers than family members”, demonstrating that ideas of public and private often have more to do with the relationship between actors than any actual placement in the street or a private home. This decreased political and legal attention to private violence can be observed also in public debates and legislation around rape, which tends to still focus heavily on the “stranger in the dark street” narrative, despite research and statistics showing clearly that most rapes are committed by people who know the victim (Linder and Lacy, 2020, 433-434). It is this creation of a category of so-called private violence, classified as not mattering in political discussions and political theory, which is discussed both here and in Chapter Six of the thesis.

Systemic violence

The concept of systemic violence addresses a number of concerns about the problematic nature of

calling some violence(s) private, by highlighting the systematic oppression and inequality connecting seemingly separate acts of private violence into a wider system of repression. Systemic violence is interpersonal violence which systematically happens only or more often to certain groups of people, often committed by a certain group of people, because of structural or systemic background factors. The individual instances of violence may, however, appear as interpersonal and unconnected, in that they are committed by one person towards one or more other persons. Systemic violence covers terms such as gendered violence, homophobic violence, racist violence, and so on. While this clearly emphasises the close link between theories of systemic violence and anti-violence activism and social justice work, academic fields such as sociology have also seen a rising interest in the study of “interpersonal violence in relation to inequalities of gender, ethnicity, religion and sexuality, as new forms of violence are documented and theorized” (Walby, 2013, 96, 100).

These background factors are typically systemic oppression or prejudice, which become a condition for such seemingly separate violent events by making them more likely, easier to commit, possible to commit with no or fewer consequences, more “normal” or acceptable to surrounding society, and even less visible (Crenshaw, 1991, 1241-1242). At the same time, the individual instances of violence can also be part of upholding the oppressive structures they are part of. Systemic violence theory is then one of a group of theories which “look at violence and its definition from a conflict perspective [and] encourage us to think about violence as an expression of power that often occurs within hierarchical social arrangements” (Triplett et al., 2016, 336).

Within the category of systemic violence are the widespread and (at times) widely discussed concepts of sexual and gender-based violence (Kaladelfos and Featherstone, 2014, 233). Although these are of course not the only forms of systemic violence, they serve as a strong example of the principles behind this concept and will be used here to illustrate the wider concept. This example also demonstrates another important point, which is the role of so-called critical or activist perspectives on theory and academia, since historically, sexual and gender-based violence have mainly been addressed by feminist perspectives which have “long been at the cutting edge of nuanced investigations of violence” (*ibid*). Through this pressure from feminist theories, new understandings of the concept of violence as such have thus been articulated and discussed.

The work of Kimberlé Crenshaw is an example of this form of nuanced definition and examination of violence, stemming from a discussion of violence against women of colour. As part

of this discussion, Crenshaw (1991, 1251-1252) coined the term “intersectionality” which has since become an influential concept in studies of violence and oppression (e.g., Collins, 2017; Parker and Hefner, 2015). Crenshaw (1991, 1242) highlights how a nuanced and broader understanding of violence is a continuation of previous work in feminism and other identity politics. She argues further that the seemingly separate events of interpersonal violence are for some an “almost routine violence that shapes their lives” (*ibid*, 1241), and this is when individual instances of violence become systemic. This argument brings structure into the discussion and treats these instances of violence as “social and systemic” rather than “isolated and individual” (*ibid*, 1241-1242). Importantly, this process leads to decreased visibility of such violent events, since:

At its first eruption, violence is always experienced as unique. If given time and repetition, however, it becomes routine, part of the air, and one learns how to breathe it without being asphyxiated. One no longer seeks to eliminate it, nor even to understand it (Lawrence and Karim eds, 2007, 5).

In her analysis, Crenshaw does not directly broaden the scope of what violence is often taken to mean. Rather, violence is social and systemic in that physical violence is often an immediate manifestation of a much wider system of subordination. This relates to other feminist analysis of violence which emphasises the “systemic nature of gendered power in structuring legal, political and social responses to violence”, so that, for example, women are often financially dependent on staying in a violent relationship, or that seeking legal redress for gendered violence or rape is extremely difficult and unlikely to succeed (Kaladelfos and Featherstone, 2014, 233). The theory of systemic violence means, then, that although instances of sexual and gendered violence are, in an immediate sense, interpersonal and individual events, these instances of violence have a clear systematic and political nature. In other words, direct physical violence and systematic oppression are in a number of cases integrally linked and cannot be understood or addressed separately.

Structural violence

In the definition of structural violence, an identifiable individual or group is not needed as a perpetrator of violence; instead, social, political, economic, or legal structures can be violent, by causing physical or non-physical harm to certain people (van der Wusten, 1996, 406). The definition of violence in this category is then one mainly focused on the effect, that is harm, rather than an

intent, action, or identifiable perpetrator being what defines violence (Vinthagen, 2015, 65). Galtung (1969, 170-171) writes that what follows from both interpersonal and structural violence is that “individuals may be killed or mutilated, hit or hurt”. Structural violence shares with systemic violence a focus on specific groups or identities being the victims of violence, rather than violence hitting equally or randomly across a society. Well known examples of structural violence arguments are articulations of capitalism as a violent economic structure (e.g., Bruenig, 2017; Laurie and Shaw, 2018), and borders as violent (e.g., Isakjee et al., 2020; Jones, 2016; Pallister-Wilkins, 2017, 19).

Galtung (1969, 178) also uses the term indirect violence for structural violence and describes this as the main line of distinction between structural and interpersonal violence. As mentioned above, the concept of structural violence falls on one side of an important dividing line between different definitions of violence, the question of whether or not an identifiable actor is needed to talk of violence (*ibid*, 170). Galtung (*ibid*, 175) states that the mechanism behind structural violence is “inequality, above all in the distribution of power”, and Vinthagen (2015, 65) describes it as mainly “a kind of ‘injustice’ or ‘oppression’”. Harris sums up the core of the argument of structural violence, and why it is important, writing that:

Where muggings and violent demonstrations are the fear and the theorists speak for the fearful, vigorous direct actions will seem the most important features of violence. Where the streets are quiet, but people who could be saved are left to die of neglect or cold or hunger, or are crippled or killed by their living or working conditions, a different group of people may suffer, and other theorists may see their suffering as attributable to human agency, and so class it a part of man’s violence to man (Harris, 1974, 219).

This quote illustrates clearly the aim of structural violence theories and definitions, which is to go beyond what is immediately seen as “violent” – that is, direct, physical harm of one person by another – and conversely, what would then be seen as a “not violent”, or “peaceful” situation, and challenge this assumption. By widening the scope of who or what can be violent, and how directly responsibility is placed, structural definitions of violence bring everyday and often unseen harm into the centre of discussions of violence.

Ted Honderich’s (1976, 13-21) discussion of the very different intuitive reactions people will have towards violence (understood as direct, physical, and obvious violence) and inequality (which

following the arguments here could be labelled structural violence) provides an argument for why direct violence is met with much more outrage and aversion than inequality is, despite the significant harm caused by inequality. He argues that one reason for this is because of:

the correct perception of the inequalities as constituting a state of *order*, and violence as constituting a circumstance of *disorder*. Inequality is a product of law, of diverse settled institutions, of custom and indeed of assent ... Violence is otherwise. A man shot by a political assassin is one of two figures in a circumstance of a wholly different character, a circumstance of anarchy (Honderich, 1976, 19).

As mentioned, a well-established example of structural violence is when the capitalist economic structure is described as violence, as famously done by Marx and in Marxist theories in general (Harris, 1974, 196). In his works, Marx provided “repeated examples of the injury, shame, degradation, and death suffered every day by the working class and directly caused by the capitalist economy” (*ibid*). What Marx focused on was the harm caused to humans by working in unsafe or “injurious conditions” which could be prevented by an employer or society, but are not because of a focus on monetary profits (*ibid*, 197). As Harris (*ibid*) writes, “Marx believes that where human intervention could prevent this harm, then failure to prevent the harm must be seen as a cause”. In a similar line of reasoning, Galtung argues that:

if people are starving when this is objectively avoidable, then violence is committed, regardless of whether there is a clear subject-action-object relation, as during a siege yesterday or no such clear relation, as in the way world economic relations are organized today (Galtung, 1969, 172).

An example of a non-material category of violence is Pierre Bourdieu’s influential concept of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2007/1977, 195). The concept of symbolic violence applies to a number of areas in society and was based on Bourdieu’s experiences in French-colonised Algeria, sociological analysis of Western societies, the concept of gift giving, as well as linguistic analysis (von Holdt, 2013, 113; Topper, 2001, 36-37). Symbolic violence refers to gestures, actions, norms etc., which function to retain a mode of domination between individuals, without the “dominated” themselves being aware of this (Aune, 2011, 432; Topper, 2001, 36). Other definitions focus on

effects and define symbolic violence as:

the experience of feeling out of place, anxious, awkward, shamed, stupid and so on because those who experience symbolic violence are both objectively unable to construct appropriate actions (because the resources necessary to do so are unavailable to them) and subjectively committed to, in the sense of recognizing, the very rules of distinction by which they are excluded and dominated (Samuel, 2013, 402).

Through these “invisible” mechanisms of domination, symbolic violence makes “the reproduction of social order something of an inevitability”, in part because dominated individuals often perceive the socially constructed norms of behaviour, identity, speech, etc., as natural and therefore participate in reinforcing the norms that oppress them (von Holdt, 2013, 115-116; Bourdieu, 2007/1977, 195-198; Topper, 2001, 37). Importantly, symbolic violence is not necessarily practiced or used consciously by a dominant group or individual, but can be used subconsciously as well (Topper, 2001, 47).

The example of symbolic violence in the shape of language and linguistic norms provides a clearer idea of what is meant by symbolic violence (Topper, 2001, 43). Domination happens here because there are clear social expectations of “correct” ways of speaking, as well as prejudice attached to having a certain accent and so on; in this way, speaking correctly confers legitimacy to a speaker, and a result of this is that:

in formal settings where ‘official’ modes of speech are socially authorized as the norm, one often finds silent and impalpable, yet also insidious forms of symbolic violence in which dominated speakers (those less skilled in the use of the authorized mode of language) desperately seek to correct, either consciously or unconsciously, the stigmatized aspects of their pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax (Topper, 2001, 37).

The example of speech is also important in political theory, since (free and equal) speech is, and has been for a long time, integrally linked to ideas of politics and the political (Topper, 2001, 43-44). In an analysis focusing on symbolic violence, such as Topper’s (2001, 45-46), the idea of free speech goes beyond direct exclusion of certain people from speaking - a more direct and observable form of violence or domination - and focuses on how “although there may be no formal barriers to

speech within a particular field, there are practical barriers to *authoritative* speech, i.e., speech that is recognized as legitimate and worthy of attention". Most often, this will lead dominated speakers to simply withdraw from the space in question (*ibid*).

Symbolic violence is then argued to be violence because it results in the harm of keeping individuals in relations of being dominated. Samuel (2013, 402) adds a further dimension to the concept of symbolic violence, by arguing that apart from the "objective hardship" experienced by the dominated in a given social order, symbolic violence is also "the subjective experience of self-blame, hesitation, self-censorship and so on" experienced because of a misfit with the dominant social order. It is important to note that Bourdieu emphasises that instances of symbolic violence are not identical or as "brutal" as forms of physical violence and that symbolic violence differs from physical violence because it works "not directly on bodies but through them" (Topper, 2001, 47). However, it shares "an accent on relations of domination and subordination, and on modes of domination or the breaching of human dignity" with other forms of violence (*ibid*). By defining the concept of symbolic violence, Bourdieu is credited with facilitating theoretical and academic explorations of: "those inconspicuous forms of violence, domination, denigration, and exclusion in everyday affairs that go unnoticed precisely because they are so ordinary and 'unremarkable'" (Topper, 2001, 42).

In a discussion of interpersonal and structural violence, Galtung (1969, 173) provides a convincing argument for why interpersonal violence is often focused on more, despite the fact that it does not necessarily result in more harm than systemic and structural forms of violence. Galtung (*ibid*) writes that "[p]ersonal violence shows", and is clearly experienced as such by the victims of violence. In contrast, "the object of structural violence may be persuaded not to perceive this at all" (*ibid*). He writes that:

Personal violence represents changes and dynamism - not only ripples on waves, but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show - it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters. In a static society, personal violence will be registered, whereas structural violence may be seen as about as natural as the air around us (Galtung, 1969, 173).

Harris (1974, 216) adds to this with an argument for the importance of looking also at

structural and systemic violence, writing that when evaluating whether a society is violent or uses violence to a significant extent, “we would certainly not ignore the fact that the society eliminated an opposition group or an unpopular minority by herding them into ghettos where they were left to die of starvation or disease”. Finally, Stanko states that:

In some ways, the willingness to make ‘ordinary’ violence visible heightens awareness about the damage of violence, and this is a good thing. It demonstrates that we are now in a position to challenge the impact of violence for groups of people where before, such violence was ‘tolerated’ as a condition of living in the world (Stanko ed, 2003, 12).

Political violence

This section will discuss the broad and commonly used concept of political violence. Although political violence is, in a sense, related to the definitional boundary of justification discussed earlier - it is distinguished as a separate category of violence mainly through its aim or justification of achieving certain political goals - it is different in the sense that it mostly does not function as a definitional line between violence and “not violence” (often named force instead). In his influential work on political violence, especially focusing on political violence on the Left, Ted Honderich defines political violence as

a considerable or destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of government, and hence also directed to changes in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other societies (Honderich, 1976, 9, emphasis removed).

With this definition, Honderich distinguishes political violence from state violence (or at least from state violence that complies with the legal limitations placed on state power), through the qualification that political violence must be illegal violence. Other definitions of political violence focus explicitly on the collective nature of this form of violence, defining political violence as “those repertoires of collective action that involve great physical force and cause damage to an adversary to achieve political aims” (della Porta, 2013, 6).

Political violence covers a wide range of acts and events. For example, Lorenzo et al. (eds, 2014, 3) list events such as “violent protest, guerrilla warfare, insurgency, terrorism, and civil wars”,

della Porta (2013, 6) mentions “attacks on property, rioting, violent confrontations between ethnic or political groups, clashes with police, physical attacks directed against specific targets, random bombings, armed seizure of places or people (including armed trespassing), holdups, and hijacking”, and Honderich (1976, 98) writes that the definition “covers such things as race riots in America, the destruction by fire and bomb of pubs and shops in Ulster, and, in both places and also in England, the injuring, maiming and killing of citizens, policemen or soldiers. It also encompasses revolutionary violence of the past”. Further, Honderich (*ibid*) specifies that the use of force “does not require that the agents of violence have in view highly specific aims of change”, which is why riots are included in his list, “despite the absence of well-articulated intentions of the given kind and also despite their non-rational momentum”.

Although the concept of political violence is well-studied in both political theory and terrorism studies, it has only more recently become significantly incorporated into the field of social movement studies (Lorenzo et al. eds, 2014, 15; della Porta, 2013, 7). This is “perhaps because researchers [in social movement studies] had been inclined to study groups and organizations they felt sympathetic to, which had not included violent political organizations” (Lorenzo et al. eds, 2014, 1). However, the concept of political violence is, according to Lorenzo et al. (*ibid*, 8), important to this area of study, mainly because “political violence often develops in the context of larger protest movements”. Political violence is especially important to the field of nonviolent resistance studies since the examples of violence said to not be used here are mainly examples of political violence (e.g., Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 12-13).

Through extensive writing on violence and revolution, Hannah Arendt has contributed significantly to the literature on political violence. In *On Violence*, Arendt (1969, 35) writes of the “general reluctance to deal with violence as a phenomenon in its own right”, and in *On Revolution*, she traces the relationship between war and revolution, the 20th century’s “two central political issues” (Arendt, 1963, 1). What these two political phenomena have in common is the role of violence, and Arendt writes that “revolutions and wars are not even conceivable outside the domain of violence”, a fact which sets “them apart from all other political phenomena” (*ibid*, 9). Arendt conceptualises a revolution as a political event which leads to a fundamental break and a new beginning and argues that “no beginning [can] be made without using violence, without violating” (*ibid*, 10). Although this sense of beginning could perhaps be conceived as a negative or undesirable

event, to Arendt (*ibid*, 27) it is crucial, because it is necessary in order to achieve freedom, i.e., “the experience of man’s faculty to begin something new”.

Although Arendt then describes violence as necessary for revolution, and revolution as an essential political event because it leads to freedom through a new beginning, in general, she does not ascribe violence a central role in politics as such. Instead, Arendt (1963, 9) describes violence as a “marginal phenomenon in the political realm” or often as simply outside of the political realm altogether. In fact, violence is in a sense destructive of the political realm, a realm based on speech and persuasion, because “[w]here violence rules absolutely ... everything and everybody must fall silent” (*ibid*). While this does raise a question of whether Arendt would argue that the concept of “political violence” is nonsensical altogether, it is argued here that since revolutions and wars are commonly – and by Arendt – classified as political phenomena, and Arendt discusses the role of violence in these, her theory of violence can usefully be applied to the theme of political violence. Arendt (*ibid*) does address this inherent contradiction herself, but nevertheless argues that revolutions and wars are political phenomena because they are not “completely determined by violence”. This is a sharp contrast to other influential political thinkers in the Western tradition, such as Weber, who argued that “[t]he decisive means for politics is violence” (quoted in Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 10).

State violence

While political violence has been shown to be a wide category of politically motivated violence, the smaller category of state violence is rarely described as a form of political violence (or even as violence at all), despite the clear political aims and consequences of much state violence. This seeming contradiction illustrates the definitional boundary around justification very well, and is arguably a prime example of the use of justification to call an act “force” rather than “violence”. For example, della Porta (2013, 6) argues that “political violence is generally understood as behavior that violates the prevailing definition of legitimate political action”, which excludes many forms of state violence from being political violence. State violence is also an important concept in the context of this thesis, because state violence - or a state overstepping what is perceived to be the boundary of legitimate state violence - is often the cause and context for an uprising or resistance campaign, and it is therefore another way in which violence plays a role in nonviolent resistance.

In contrast to this common separation of state violence and political violence as distinct categories, Frazer and Hutchings (2019) challenge the distinction in a number of ways. Firstly, they argue that the two forms of violence are at least inherently and closely connected, since the majority of events that would be considered political violence, such as riots or sabotage, are accompanied by the involvement of “police and security personnel whose job is to protect the existing social and political order, including policing demonstrations and counter-demonstrations” (Frazer and Hutchings, 2019, 7-8). However, the authors go further and argue that the state violence-political violence line is “[c]learly ... a difficult distinction to sustain” because of the “vagueness of these distinctions, between institutions, actors and kinds of violence” (Frazer and Hutchings, 2019, 9, 12). This leads them to argue that:

a more plausible approach might be to include in the category of political violence all violence connected to political purposes broadly conceived, including winning, securing, stabilizing, destabilizing, deploying and challenging power (Frazer and Hutchings, 2019, 12).

Whether seen as just another instance of political violence, or a unique category of state violence or force, the relationship between states and violence is well documented and thoroughly discussed. This was famously pointed out already in 1919 when Weber defined the state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory” and argued that “the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one” (quoted in Barbalet, 2020, 3). Further, authors such as Devetak (Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 12) argue that “all states, from ‘failed’ states to ‘strong’ ones, are conditioned by violence, even if the type, degree and intensity of this violence varies”. State violence essentially functions as a “central part of the punishment for rule-breakers” with the assumption that this punishment will deter people from breaking the rules (Vinhagen, 2015, 173). The state’s monopoly on violence, through “key groups such as the police and the military”, creates a possibility for this deterrent to be in place (Vinhagen, 2015, 173).

Violence is further described as central to the process of state building, both by establishing borders through international warfare and establishing absolute power by subduing the population within those borders (Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 11). Within Weber’s influential theory of the state, “states had to monopolize control over the instruments of violence” in order to “consolidate

and intensify their rule” (*ibid*). This process “required the concentration of administration power and more intensive and extensive forms of social surveillance through policing” (*ibid*). Even in more established states, violence remains “not just a permanent potential but a structural component of the state” (*ibid*, 12).

Further, in another example of interpersonal violence being used to draw boundaries between “society” and the dangers outside it, European states were able to further focus “political authority around the state’s monopoly over physical violence” by fighting and minimising so-called “private international violence” such as “pirates, privateers, mercenaries, and merchant companies” (Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 11). Through this solidification of a monopoly on violence, states were able to produce “a pacified social space that makes the outbreak of physical force less likely. That is why the monopoly over force has been central to the state’s legitimacy” (*ibid*, 12), because it is seen as guaranteeing the safety of its citizens.

A number of thinkers have, however, been challenging this assumed right of the state to use physical force to coerce. Famous examples of this include Marxist theories, anarchist theory, and also Gandhi’s thinking on the state (Gandhi, 2007/1909, 123; Lawrence and Karim, 2007, 12-13). In his writings, Gandhi is not merely against British rule over India, but more generally against the conception that a state should be governed by majority rule with no acceptance of civil disobedience of laws that a citizen might find immoral or unjust (Gandhi, 2007/1909, 123). Rather, Gandhi (*ibid*, 123-124) writes a “passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience”. Such continued scepticism and resistance is a crucial part of the concept of *swaraj*, or self-rule (*ibid*).

Harris (1974) summarises the Marxist conception of violence as one which seeks to emphasise violence and physical harm that is often overlooked. They write that while it is often easy to see events such as revolutions as having led to an unusual number of deaths, if the deaths resulting from the regime in place were calculated based on factors such as “starvation and injustice”, it would not be drastically different from the death rate from revolutionary violence (Harris, 1974, 196). Thus, Marxist theories of violence point to the political agendas or “partisan hypocrisy” that can be behind seeing some physical harm as the result of violence and others as simply inevitable or the state of the world and argue that “responsibility rests as much with those who allow such states of affairs to continue as with those who brought them about” (Harris, 1974, 196-197).

Within liberal theories of the state, the argument that violence is intrinsic to the building and maintaining of a state structure is challenged in an arguably highly purist theory of the state's relationship to violence. In liberalism, there is an assumption that violence is arbitrary and "an aberration that can be expunged from political life if only the right institutions are established to govern" (Devetak and Hughes eds, 2007, 10). However, as Devetak (*ibid*) argues, "[n]otwithstanding their aversion to violence, even liberals must acknowledge that physical force may sometimes be necessary to protect the institutions of liberal democracy and punish lawmakers".

In the area of critical theories, Bourdieu's conception of symbolic power shares a focus on the state as violent, since "the state is at the centre of the construction of symbolic order" and holds "the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence" (von Holdt, 2013, 115). Because current social orders are based on domination and being dominated, it constitutes symbolic violence when the state plays a crucial role in reproducing this social order over time (*ibid*). In his analysis of state violence, Bourdieu comments on the overlap of material and non-material definitions of violence, by pointing out the "symbolic dimension" to the physical violence of police repressing protest, by which they "are not only attempting to control 'rioters'", but also "asserting the symbolic authority of the state to deploy violence" to maintain "order" (*ibid*, 119). This symbolic aspect of physical violence is not only seen with state violence, however, but also when protesters for example smash or burn buildings, or attack police officers or soldiers (*ibid*). A final contribution mentioned here to the critical literature on state violence is that of Malcolm X, who commented on the role of the police in upholding oppressive, unjust, and at times illegal state structures. In his famous speech *The Ballot or the Bullet*, Malcolm X argued that:

Whenever you demonstrate against segregation, whether it is segregated education, segregated housing, or anything else, the law is on your side, and anyone who stands in the way is not the law any longer. They are breaking the law, they are not representatives of the law (Malcolm X, 2007/1964, 149).

Here, Malcolm X pointed out, as part of his defence of a violent civil rights struggle, that there is violence on both sides, that the police and police dogs attacking protesters is not a form of necessary force to uphold peace and order, but rather an inherently violent action which defends an unjust and violent social system. An interesting aspect here is that although Malcolm X uses his

arguments to advocate violent resistance, while Gandhi used his to advocate nonviolence, the two thinkers have a surprising amount in common in their arguments about placing justice and morality above existing laws, as well as sacrificing oneself for the cause of justice. The arguments around state violence and making state violence visible and a site of contestation can then be seen in both violent and nonviolent advocacy.

Property damage

The discussion of how to classify property damage in relation to the violence-nonviolence distinction is central to nonviolent resistance. While the question is discussed in a number of activist and practitioner deliberations on the line between violence and nonviolence, it is more sparsely addressed in academic nonviolence literature (Case, 2018, 10, 12; Sommier et al., 2019, 218). The implied consensus in this academic literature is that property damage is either violence, or, at least, clearly not compatible with nonviolent resistance methods; that is, not nonviolent.

Examples of discussions about property damage and the violence/nonviolence divide among activists or practitioners includes for example the online magazine *Quaker Theology*, which states that that “[t]here is a long standing debate among peace and justice advocates over the use of property damage as a tactic” (Johnson, 2004). Because of the contested nature of property damage tactics, many nonviolent protests or actions involve an explicit agreement for the action in question, as to whether property damage will be accepted or not (Johnson, 2004). *The New Internationalist* also provides a discussion of the protest tactic of property damage, writing that:

Photos of masked ‘black bloc’ protesters smashing windows seem to accompany most international summits these days. But the debate over whether property destruction is a valid tactic for bringing about social and political change stretches as far back as protest itself (New Internationalist, 2011).

In an article in *Current Affairs*, Nimni (2017) writes that the particular broadening of the meaning of violence to include damage to property is one that comes from the political right, but also that it is seen increasingly in news reports on political protests. As Nimni (*ibid*) writes, this definition “flows logically from certain strands of libertarian philosophy, which view a person’s property as an extension of the self, and therefore acts of aggression against property as being

indistinguishable from acts of aggression against persons”. The argument about property damage as violence which Nimni is discussing here seems to be the one that claims that property damage is in and of itself and in all cases a violent act, because it is intrinsically tied to the person who owns the property. Other arguments about property damage as violence, as ones presented in this section, could feasibly be found within all political convictions, as they centre around property damage as a threat of violence (and therefore as violence), as indirect harm to a person (and therefore as violence), etc. Nimni (2017) dismisses this idea of property damage as intrinsically violent as only valid if “we accept quasi-religious fiction of property as part of a person’s self” and concludes that property damage is different to violence in “an obvious and significant way”. In addition, they attribute the media coverage of protests as “turning violent” when property damage occurs as “often merely just rhetoric deployed to paint ‘rioters’ as morally bankrupt” (*ibid*).

A famous and prominent example of a nonviolent movement using property damage as a central tactic is the Plowshares movement, a pacifist movement on “the so-called Catholic Left” (Nepstad, 2008, xiv). The movement became well-known in the US during the Vietnam War for breaking into offices holding conscription files to destroy the files by pouring blood on them and burning draft records (*ibid*). After the Vietnam War, the Plowshares movement turned their attention to nuclear warfare, and “engaged in property destruction to resist the escalating nuclear arms race, using household hammers to damage nuclear weapons” (*ibid*). Since then, the movement has been conducting what they call “acts of disarmament” in which “activists enter weapons production sites or military installations to damage weapons” (*ibid*, 3). In *Quaker Theology*, Johnson (2004) emphasises that the main argument in this tradition for embracing certain forms of property damage as nonviolent tactics is that “some property has no right to exist and therefore damage done to this type of property is not violent” (see also Nepstad, 2008, 63-64 and Sommer et al., 2019, 229 for arguments from Plowshares activists on this). It is then worth noting from these Plowshares arguments, and from nonviolence theory on property damage which will be discussed below, that an important assumption here is that “property” as a concept holds a special protection. That is, the assumption is that it is violent to damage an object because it is the property of someone, rather than because the damaging of objects in itself is automatically violent.

Despite this interest amongst practitioners of nonviolence, the issue of categorising property damage is as mentioned discussed only rarely discussed within research literature on violent and

nonviolent resistance. For example, Chenoweth and Stephan provide a discussion of property damage and the violence-nonviolence definitional boundary only in a footnote to their discussion writing here that:

While it goes beyond the scope of this study to elaborate on this debate, certain forms of destruction – such as Gandhi’s burning of identity cards in South Africa and Vietnam war protesters’ burning of draft cards – are typically classified as nonviolent direct actions. In each of these examples, the acts of property damage were planned and conducted in the context of highly organised nonviolent campaigns, were limited in focus and specific intent, and were explained by the activists, who were willing to face the legal consequences of their actions. These actions differ from acts of vandalism targeting shops and government buildings during demonstrations, often conducted by individuals who flee from the scene and are unwilling to face the legal consequences of their actions. Throwing rocks through shop windows during anti-globalization demonstrations are examples of actions that, while technically not violent, would not be classified by most as methods of nonviolent direct action (in Chenoweth and Lawrence eds, 2010, 250-251, footnote 7).

The examples provided here can certainly be described as nonviolent and violent respectively within a consistent explanatory framework; they fit neatly into the principle described by Johnson (2004), for example, that there is a significant difference between property damage during large protests and riots, and property damage against “a carefully planned symbolic target”. However, other examples, such as planned and disciplined destruction of buildings (such as in South Africa) as potentially nonviolent, or the burning of flags or books as potentially violent, challenge the extent to which this definitional line can be clearly drawn. This is then, arguably, an example of the issues which can arise from basing any theory solely on observations of practical examples: if the examples chosen are fairly clear and evidently belong in one category or the other, it creates an image of a clear definition, where in fact the lines may be much less clear if other questions or examples were examined instead.

In *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Gene Sharp provides one of the few lengthier and more thorough discussions of property damage and sabotage at length. In this discussion, acts of damage or destruction against property are explicitly excluded from the definition of violence, unless they

result in “injury or death to *persons*, or threaten to do so” (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 608). The discussion also demonstrates ways in which sabotage has been used as part of nonviolent action (*ibid*). Sharp also recognises that, as argued above, some actions will “fall somewhere between sabotage and nonviolent action”, that is, it will not be clearly and easily classifiable as violent or not violent acts, but he excludes these borderline cases from the subsequent discussion (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 608). Although Sharp concludes that sabotage is not in itself violence, he writes:

But sabotage has never, to my knowledge, been deliberately applied by a disciplined movement which has consciously chosen to fight by nonviolent action. Gandhi constantly emphasized that sabotage was contrary to this technique. In terms of the principles, strategy and mechanisms of operation, sabotage is more closely related to violent than to nonviolent action. This is true even though the aim of the sabotage may be only the destruction of material objects without taking lives – such as an empty bridge as distinct from a bridge being crossed by enemy troops (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 609).

In other words, Sharp argues that although property damage is not violent, as a tactic for political struggle, it has more in common with armed struggle than nonviolent resistance; and thus, it is not part of his repertoire of nonviolent tactics. Although Sharp mentions principles in the above quote as an aspect in which property damage is significantly different from nonviolent action, true to his usual focus on tactics and strategy, the main argument used to exclude property damage from nonviolence repertoires is nine different reasons why sabotage will weaken a nonviolent movement. These are all rooted in the fact that the two approaches have “differing dynamics and mechanisms” (Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 609). Sharp (*ibid*, 610-611) then mentions examples of actions where sabotage undermined nonviolent action, and concludes that “[f]or these reasons, the idea that sabotage is compatible with nonviolent action must be rejected, as either a false accusation of uninformed critics, or as a highly dangerous action proposal likely to disrupt the processes which could bring strength and victory.”

Martin et al. (2009) provide an example of research which examines the differences between violence towards objects and persons in depth, while treating property damage as violence. This article argues – contrary to the argument here – that the definition of violence as being both damage on people and objects is widely accepted, but that the distinction between the two categories is still

significant and under-explored in research (Martin et al., 2009, 822-823). This is true also for empirical research on the topic of collective violence (*ibid*, 823). This assumption of property damage as included in the definition of violence is then not, as Nimni (2017) suggests, only evident in mainstream media's reporting on protests, but also in some research literature, much of which places the distinction between persons and objects as targets on a spectrum of "light to heavy violence" (Martin et al., 2009, 823). Harris (1974, 214) for example defines property damage as violence – and intuitively so – but as "minor, even trivial" violence. If this is applied to a distinction of violent and nonviolent campaigns, then an opposite conclusion to Sharp's might be made: which is that property damage is violent, but could be part of a nonviolent campaigns, whereas Sharp concludes that property damage is not violent, but cannot be part of a nonviolent campaign. This argument could even be seen as consistent with Chenoweth and Stephan's (2011, 12) categorisation of "principally nonviolent" campaigns as being counted as examples of nonviolent resistance. However, Martin et al. (2009, 823) do not address arguments for why property damage is violent and treat this lack of attention as "unproblematic" as long as "the causal mechanisms responsible for violence do not vary depending on who or what is attacked". The authors ultimately conclude, however, that the distinction *does* matter, since they provide evidence suggesting that the causal mechanisms are different (*ibid*, 832).

Conclusion

What this chapter has aimed to demonstrate is that although there is a rich and varied literature on the concept of violence, this does not provide or promise a single and unified definition of violence. What the literature does demonstrate and argue is that violence is a highly complex, varied, and contested idea within politics as well as other fields of study. As Butler (2020, 14, emphasis removed) argues, "violence is always interpreted"; however, this "does not mean that violence is nothing but an interpretation, where interpretation is conceived as a subjective and arbitrary mode of designation". This argument, that the lack of a single clear definition of violence is not the same as stating that violence can mean anything and everything, is also apparent from the present chapter, which demonstrates that consistent arguments for what counts as violence can be applied. However, which arguments are chosen is important to understand, and matters immensely to the theories and research which use them.

Considering this, it is perhaps unsurprising that much nonviolence literature has been reluctant to start on what seems not only a complex, but a never-ending task of understanding and defining violence as a starting point for understanding and defining nonviolence. However, the aim of this thesis is to argue that an understanding of and interest in violence is necessary for nonviolence theory; but also, as argued in the introduction to this chapter, that this is not in the sense of having to finally define violence in order to know what the “opposite” or “not” of nonviolence is. Rather, it is a task of continually thinking about and engaging with violence, because violence and nonviolence are continually engaged with each other in different ways and contexts. The following chapters of the thesis will provide some possible demonstrations of how to operationalise a more thorough understanding of the concept of violence, showing how this understanding can be applied to practical and relevant issues for nonviolent resistance, in order to add constructive and necessary perspectives to nonviolence theory and practice. Although the remainder of the thesis is then essentially an exploration of the implications of applying a thorough engagement with thinking on the concept of violence to nonviolence theory, a few of those possible implications will be discussed briefly here as well in order to start that conversation.

One example of this is the perspective of Hannah Arendt, who is rarely included in pacifist or nonviolence literature. However, through her theory on violence and politics, Arendt makes a potentially important contribution to nonviolence arguments, writing that:

a theory of revolution ... can only deal with the justification of violence because this justification constitutes its political limitation; if, instead, it arrives at a glorification or justification of violence as such, it is no longer political, but antipolitical (Arendt, 1963, 10).

Although Arendt does argue that violence is a defining and creative part of both wars and revolutions (Arendt, 1963, 21-22), she also argues here that acknowledging the role of violence in revolutions does not mean – and cannot mean within the limits of “the political” – glorifying violence as such.

Also, Harris (1974) provides an example of implications for nonviolence theory in their discussion of Marxist theories of violence. While Harris does – as discussed earlier in this chapter – acknowledge the importance of Marxist critiques of seeing violence as only direct physical harm by one actor to another, they write here that:

the Marxist view would obscure or collapse the traditional distinction between violence and nonviolence. We can, and do, tell the difference between clubbing a man to death and peacefully enjoying a good meal while he starves to death outside, or between burning down a man's house and evicting him. The distinction between violent and nonviolent ways of doing things is clear and useful for evaluating actions, and it allows us to try to understand and explain just what it is about violence that makes it such a fearful thing, so fearful a thing, indeed, that many men have been led to renounce violence absolutely (or at least as much as is convenient). The maintenance of the violent-nonviolent distinction, so far from begging any questions, as Marxists sometimes argue, leaves open all questions as to whether violent means are, for example, better or worse than nonviolent means. The distinction merely allows us to reserve the name of violence for those fearful acts upon which the traditional abhorrence of violence is founded (Harris, 1974, 213).

While parts of Harris' argument will be shown to be debatable throughout this thesis, it provides a strong example of the problem of assuming that the need to understand violence better is because there is a simple violence-nonviolence dichotomy, one which means that everything which is not violence is nonviolence (rather than not violent), and that everything which includes some measure of violence is no longer nonviolent work or methods. In this way, the implications for nonviolence theory of providing a more thorough understanding of the concept of violence is not a simple, linear one, but as with the concepts themselves, a complex and perhaps at times contradictory one.

Another important point to note from this chapter is the approach of trying to understand and conceptualise violence better, not through seeking one final definition of the concept, but by seeing violence "as understood through the lives of a diversity of people" as having "diverse contexts and forms" (Stanko, 2003, 2). As Stanko writes further:

Through an approach that does not assume a standard definition, violence – as a phenomenon – can no longer be conceptualised as fixed, understood and inevitable. I would even go so far as to suggest that it is only through fluidity of definition that we can think creatively about disrupting violence as a social phenomenon (Stanko, 2003, 3).

This is why, in the context of nonviolence (which does seek to minimise or disrupt violence),

theorists and activists cannot be “finished” with thinking about violence, as Baldoli (2019, 8-9) for example suggests they can. Rather, to practice and develop nonviolence becomes in this framework a task of continually discussing, conceptualising, and looking at violence – not as an absolute opposite to the work of nonviolence, but rather as a present reality which compromises, but does not negate, the idea of “nonviolent” work and activism. This, again, also comes back to a theory of nonviolence which avoids purism, and realises that reckoning with the continued role of violence in nonviolent activism is not a matter of pointing out hypocrisy and rejecting the entire idea, but rather a matter of realising and working with the full complexity of the situation (Shotwell, 2016, 6-7).

However, another part of understanding this complexity better is one which strays further away from much nonviolence literature. Where especially the strategic literature on nonviolence often aims to be apolitical, that is, to be a tool or method to be used potentially by groups of any political persuasion (Baldoli, 2019, 7; Weber, 2003, 260), this chapter on violence has aimed to demonstrate that that is unrealistic and potentially problematic. This argument starts already with the examination of different theories of violence, which are often motivated by different political outlooks, and always representative of a certain discourse and narrative about the social and political world. As Harris (1974, 219) for example argues, different definitions and theories of violence do not necessarily spring from “confusion of any kind”, but rather from different conceptions of underlying (political) questions such as responsibility, the role of negative actions, etc. For example, in Butler’s (2020, 4-6) discussion of how to avoid state co-optation of the term violence to be applied to any opposition to state power, they emphasise structural and systemic state violence and distinguishes this as significantly different to unarmed protest violence by specifically adopting the framing of working against less visible forms of state violence, rather than simply against “all” violence. This is important, because “to define violence is, in a sense, to determine the scope of [the] problem”, and this definition will vary depending on political view point, personal bias, context, and so on (Harris, 1974, 219).

Chapter Five: Violence Against Nonviolent Protesters

In 2015, Republican presidential contender Mike Huckabee argued in an interview with CNN that Martin Luther King, Jr. would have been “appalled” by the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM), a movement which had been receiving increasing attention during presidential campaigns in the US (Bradner, 2015). The Black Lives Matter movement started in 2013, originally from the Twitter tag #BlackLivesMatter, but reignited and grew on a completely different scale in 2014 after the killing of Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri (Banks, 2018, 709). Since then, the grassroots movement has become a network of over 40 chapters across the US and in other countries (Clayton, 2018, 449; Black Lives Matter, 2020a). The interview with Huckabee was far from the only time that the Black Lives Matter movement has been held up against the popular narrative of the 1960s civil rights movement as a peace-loving and all-encompassing justice movement with King as the charismatic promoter of universally American ideals of progress and liberty as discussed in Chapter Three. In these narratives, BLM is often found to be lacking in comparison (Banks, 2018, 709; Clayton, 2018, 449). However, BLM activists are not necessarily deterred by this, with hip-hop artist Tef Poe, for example, proclaiming at a Black Lives Matter event in 2014 that “This ain’t your grandparent’s civil rights movement” (quoted in Marah et al., 2018, 1). If this lack of concern with being denied a status as the civil rights movement 2.0 is to be taken seriously, then that indicates that these BLM activists do not see what the 1960s civil rights movement did or achieved as the *only* way to protest and resist racial inequality and racist violence. While there are a number of ways in which BLM has purposefully changed or developed their form of activism compared to the civil rights movement, some of which are discussed further in Chapter Six, the focus in this present chapter is their respective responses to repressive violence. Both movements have been met with public and extreme violence when protesting racial violence and inequality, and dramatic pictures and footage of this have been an important part of public knowledge and narratives about the movements (Cullors, 2019; Engler and Engler, 2014; Kurtz and Smithey, 2018b; Reis and Martin, 2008, 7; Vinthagen, 2015, 113). The example of these two movements for racial justice illustrates a number of aspects of the wider situation of repressive violence against nonviolent movements, which is the centre of this chapter.

Violent repression of civil resistance campaigns is common, and this is an important part of understanding nonviolent activism. In their statistical analysis, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 51)

found that repression of resistance campaigns occurred in 88 percent of the campaigns in their dataset. Within nonviolence literature, this situation has mostly been discussed with reference to the concept of voluntary suffering or self-sacrifice as a way to convert the opponent, and later with reference to backfire dynamics or repression backfire as a model in which violence against a campaign backfires on the opponent and strengthens the movement. As discussed in Chapter Two, the backfire dynamic is one of the central mechanisms of nonviolent resistance (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018, 1; Martin, 2015, 150; Nepstad, 2015, 124). Traditionally, the idea of voluntary suffering is viewed as belonging to the tradition of principled nonviolence, while backfire models are seen as belonging in the strategic approach to nonviolence. However, this chapter argues that these concepts and discussions are a particularly strong example of the continued connections and inseparability of principled and strategic approaches to nonviolence, and that attempts to ignore questions of principles and normative assumptions in backfire models lead to problematic assumptions and recommendations, as well as a limitation of options provided by nonviolence literature on how to respond to violent repression.

Extinction Rebellion, introduced in Chapter Two, are an example of this overlap or intersection of principles and strategy, and this example will be used here as an illustration. The group have been criticised, especially in the early days of their activities, for failing to understand or acknowledge the full implications of their strategy of mass civil disobedience, and particularly their attempts to provoke mass arrests. Among the critiques were concerns that Extinction Rebellion did not understand the vastly different experiences that people of colour would have in the UK policing, legal, and prison system compared to white people. For example, a prison guide published by XR for jailed activists advised their members to use their time in prison to “practice yoga” and “learn from their experience”, and that “[i]f you get solitary [confinement], there’s plenty of time for meditation. Lastly you can take as many naps as you want!” (Rannard, 2019). In response to this, Eda Seyhan, a lawyer and anti-prison activist, stated to the BBC that “[p]rison is not - and I cannot stress this enough - a yoga retreat ... Prisons are dangerous and oppressive institutions where disproportionate numbers of black and brown men are locked away from the rest of society” (*ibid*). What these critiques demonstrate is that inequalities amongst nonviolent activists in their private lives also have important effects on their participation in nonviolent resistance. In this particular instance, the focus of this chapter which is violence against protesters, is one such equality, because some citizens –

and therefore activists – will be met with disproportionate police violence, whether or not they choose to participate in “voluntary suffering” or not.

This chapter makes three overall arguments: firstly, that the approach of some theories of nonviolence to the occurrence of violence against nonviolent protesters, mainly through models of repression backfire, illustrate the continued importance of pacifism or principled nonviolence, despite attempts to articulate a purely strategic theory of nonviolence; secondly, and relatedly, that the dynamic of backfire and the strategic options presented raises important normative questions and issues, which should not, this chapter argues, be ignored fully with an argument of focusing on possible short-term victories; and thirdly, that examining these issues also leads to an argument that there are other possible and constructive approaches for nonviolent movements to deal with violent repression, and that the focus on backfire alone leads to a narrowing of strategic options for nonviolent campaigns.

To demonstrate these arguments, this chapter starts by looking briefly at normative issues or themes around the situation of violence against protesters and previous discussions of this. It then looks in more depth at the issue of risk and unequal levels of risk for different protesters, by revisiting the story of Extinction Rebellion and looking at critiques that the group did not realise or account for these inequalities. After this, the chapter will demonstrate the continued influence of spiritual and moralistic arguments around voluntary suffering in modern backfire theories. This discussion will show that although this is no longer conceptualised as about conversion of the opponent or perpetrator, conversion remains at the centre of backfire theories. This means that although the basic argument around repression backfire and violence against protesters is a fairly simple one, a number of the assumptions and concepts behind this seemingly simple mechanism – repression leads to sympathy, leads to support – warrant further examination. Also, the hierarchy of different forms of suffering, as well as the hierarchies that can arise between activists and within movements based on this will be discussed. After this, the chapter will complicate and problematise the process of sympathy generation, which will be shown to be a more biased, unequal, and problematic process than assumed in backfire theories. During these discussions, both Extinction Rebellion and the Black Lives Matter movement will be used as examples. Finally, the chapter will consider arguments, based mainly on the example of Black Lives Matter, that the requirement to suffer violence and repression in an exemplary fashion to earn progress on social justice issues is

not only problematic, but also counterproductive to substantial moves towards equality for marginalised groups.

When violence is part of movement success

Although violence against protesters is frequently discussed within nonviolence literature, there is little to no discussion about whether this fact - that violence used *against* nonviolent protesters is the basis of a major mechanism of nonviolent resistance - complicates, blurs, or changes the label of “nonviolent resistance” at all. As Butler (in Schneider, 2011) asks, “[i]f one puts one’s body on the line, in the way of a truck or a tank, is one not entering into a violent encounter?” That is not to argue that nonviolent resistance is thereby the same as violent resistance, but rather that the placing of nonviolence resistance “outside of the orbit of violence altogether” (*ibid*) seems mistaken. Once this is recognised (which requires a rejection of purist ideas of this situation being simply a question of self-sacrifice with no violent implications) a number of questions with regards to the relationship between violence and nonviolence within this scenario arise.

The question of whether it is, or can be, part of a theory of repression backfire within nonviolent resistance to encourage or provoke violent repression in order to achieve backfire is an immediate question and concern. Although this chapter will discuss the fact that organisers in Extinction Rebellion did not see this as entailing a risk of violence, this question is relevant when discussing the movement, which stated outright that their strategy involved “courting arrest” (Farrell et al., 2019, 96). A video produced for British newspaper *The Guardian* demonstrates this, showing Extinction Rebellion co-founder Roger Hallam telling a police officer that “arrests aren’t happening quickly enough”, and later telling an assembly of people that “[y]ou need about 400 people to go to prison. About two or three thousand people to get arrested” (quoted in Smoke, 2019). This refers back to one of the iconic nonviolent movements covered in Chapter Three, since the US civil rights movement is known for its ability to use and sometimes provoke displays of “blatant, public brutality” from their opponents in the police or military (Kirk, 2004, 89; Nimtz, 2016, 2). Despite this prominence of tactics which deliberately provoked violence, or more extreme violence, the issue and possible controversy around this is mostly only hinted at or briefly mentioned in the literature on backfire. For example, Kurtz and Smithey write in their book on the paradox of repression:

While Gandhi may not call for the provocation of opponents, he declares that nonviolence often involves taking on suffering rather than inflicting it. Whether that necessarily involves strategically provoking repression remains a matter for debate. Some feel that much of the power of nonviolent action lies in the purity of a nonviolent discipline that it easily contrasted with the brutality of open repression. In Chapter Seven, we argue that a fundamental goal of nonviolent resistance is to proactively heighten the contrast between the nonviolent discipline of activists and elite repression (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 306).

While this quote attempts to not state this directly, the authors do argue that provoking repression, or provoking to increase the intensity of the repression, is compatible with nonviolent resistance and sometimes a necessary part of this. Elsewhere, the authors do state directly that “the paradox of repression relies in large part not on avoiding repression but on enduring and sometimes provoking it” (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 13). Vinthagen (2015, 112-113) also argues, with the example of segregation and the civil rights movement in the US, that when using repression to dramatise injustice, “[t]he more violence that is used [by the opponent], the more brutal the segregation (and its defendants) appear”.

In contrast, Gross (2018, 317) brings this question of provoking repression to the center of the discussion by including it in the definition of the backfire effect. They (*ibid*) write that backfire “is used here to describe how protesters successfully employ nonviolent tactics to provoke a brutal and disproportionate response from their adversary” to increase sympathy and support for the movement. Gross (*ibid*, 317-318) argues that this raises a number of ethical questions, including questions of organiser responsibility, a right to resist for protesters exposed to such violence, and whether “provoking violence that may result in the deaths of activists [is] antithetical to nonviolent resistance even if effective at achieving larger goals”. This leads to the naming of the backfire dynamic “the dark side of nonviolent resistance”; however, this is not, Gross argues, because the occurrence of violence against protesters or because the backfire effect ultimately contradicts the nonviolent nature of the protest, but because the normative and ethical questions that arise from this dynamic are not discussed and illuminated (*ibid*, 324). In other words, and in keeping with overall arguments in this thesis, the fact that violence is fundamental to a major nonviolent resistance dynamic does not mean that its nonviolent character is negated. It does, however, make it important to acknowledge and reckon with the integral role that violence plays in this part of

nonviolent resistance, and issues and complications arising from this fact. To address this, Gross (*ibid*, 321, 324-325) attempts to draw out some preliminary and/or vague ethical guidelines around backfire in terms of preserving the moral high ground for nonviolent resistance movements, arguing, for example, that a condition for arguing that the suffering is indeed voluntary is the ability to meaningfully consent. This raises the issue that that “seems to exclude minors from political activism that may turn violent. In the annals of nonviolent resistance, however, children have often proved exceptionally effective” (*ibid*, 321). A further consideration is the access to information for activists, in terms of understanding the risks they are taking (*ibid*).

In addition to this discomfort with a potential for encouraging activists and movements to provoke repression, this chapter is also concerned with the limited focus of nonviolence literature when it comes to the question of how movements might respond to or deal with repressive violence. With regards to this particular role of violence, nonviolence literature focuses almost exclusively on the potential for backfire, which will be shown in this chapter to be based on a number of problematic dynamics and assumptions in itself. This means that other more defiant responses, or responses attempting to avoid using and strengthening these problematic dynamics, are excluded from the nonviolent repertoire presented by key literature. Because of that, these responses risk being excluded from the imagined possibilities and tactics of activists who defer to it. That is, the implication of this heavy focus on backfire dynamics is that dealing with repression by attempting to achieve backfire is the only “constructive” or “strategic” way to approach this. In contrast, this chapter will discuss arguments and strategies that challenge the necessity of suffering in order to earn social justice as alternatives to seeking out repression backfire. This is not to argue that avoiding repression as a resistance movement is feasible, and therefore not to argue against attempts to theorise what movements and activists can do in response to this, but merely an attempt to open up the field of options for responses, and to demonstrate the limitations and problems with the backfire dynamic.

Inequalities of risk

While a number of the discussions and themes in this chapter are centred around the normative assumptions and implications of (even strategic) nonviolence theory on violent repression, one aspect in particular speaks also to a core part of the strategic arguments for nonviolent resistance:

the discussion of risk for protesters. This discussion of risk is in one sense well acknowledged in nonviolence literature. For example, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 37) argue that it is an important advantage of nonviolent resistance over violent that it is open to “people with varying levels of commitment and risk tolerance”. In other words, the risk arising from participation is acknowledged as important, because it makes participation more likely in nonviolent campaigns than violent ones. However, a number of the arguments for why nonviolence is less risky are centred around what Chenoweth and Stephan (*ibid*, 38) call “methods of dispersion”, which are nonviolent tactics aimed at avoiding arrest, detection, and violent repression, rather than about the tactics mainly discussed in the present chapter, which come with a high level of risk of arrest, and, especially for some activists, violence. The glorification of the public and performative suffering that is discussed here is therefore also important in a purely strategic sense, in that it risks pushing to the margins of movements and popular imagination the very diversity of tactics and roles which are argued to be a major strength of nonviolent resistance.

Extinction Rebellion was met – especially in the early months of the movement – with criticism that their approach to nonviolent protesting was problematically colour blind and privileged. These criticisms particularly focused on how heavily centred Extinction Rebellion’s tactics were around provoking arrest through their actions (e.g., Cowan, 2019; Smoke, 2019). It is important to emphasise that these critiques, as well as the present discussion, are not aiming to criticise the tactics of civil disobedience and direct action as such, tactics which inevitably involve a degree of risk for activists, but rather the heavy focus of this one aspect of resistance, and the dismissal of other tactics. For example, Roger Hallam who is one of the founders of XR, writes in the Extinction Rebellion manual that “[w]e have to be clear. Conventional campaigning does not work. Sending emails, giving money to NGOs, going on A-to-B marches” (Farrell et al., 2019, 100). Hallam (*ibid*, 104) writes further that although nonviolent civil resistance does not “work every time”, it “enables you to roll the dice. Emailing and marching don’t roll that dice”. The group’s manual, *This is not a drill: An Extinction Rebellion handbook* (*ibid*, 96) also argues that “[o]ne of the most powerful ways to bring about change is when people are willing to be imprisoned for non-violent civil disobedience”, and that this means “courting arrest”.

Apart from the focus on arrestable actions as the exclusive model for achieving social change, critics also pointed to Extinction Rebellion’s approach to arrests, policing, and prisons in the

United Kingdom as displaying a problematic lack of acknowledgement of the violence of these institutions. This is important not only because it highlights an intersection of forms of violence which is important in itself, but also because this form of violence against some protesters – depending on systematic and structural factors – affects the dynamics of protesters risking repression in the form of arrest and/or violence. As Cowan (2019) notes in one of the earliest published critiques of Extinction Rebellion, climate justice organisers had been raising concerns that XR’s “tactics of engaging with law enforcement fail to acknowledge the long history of police brutality against communities of colour”. In their movement handbook – published after Cowan’s critiques – Extinction Rebellion acknowledged some differences in safety levels in terms of risking arrest. The group wrote that “[t]he tactics we use in the United Kingdom or the United States are not always effective or safe in other countries, especially those under repressive regimes or dictatorships” (Farrell et al., 2019, 12). What this acknowledgement does not discuss, however, is the difference in safety levels *within* the UK and US, which are affected by race, gender, disabilities, etc. and which are what the majority of the critiques of XR focus on.

Cowan (2019) also interviewed a climate justice organiser with the Black Lives Matter UK movement, who stated that while getting arrested “is definitely part of a repertoire of resistance”, Extinction Rebellion’s approach to this was “quite dangerous”. Some of the concerns centred around whether Extinction Rebellion had sufficient, or any, trial support in place, and that with as many arrests as XR were aiming for, “they aren’t going to have all 500 people who have been arrested trialed on the same day. That means you are going to have really isolated people going through quite traumatic experiences” (in Cowan, 2019). This concern was echoed by Smoke who voiced similar concerns in an article for *The Guardian* in April 2019. This was based on Smoke’s own experience going through the UK court system as one of the “Stansted 15” activists, a group of activists who stopped an immigration deportation flight through direct action by chaining themselves to the plane (Smoke, 2019). Smoke (*ibid*) writes that “direct action and becoming entombed in the endless bureaucracy of our glacial criminal justice system because of it, should only make up a tiny portion of our work as activists”, because prolonged legal battles take resources from a movement which could otherwise have gone towards helping marginalised people and groups who do not have the option to choose to be arrested for civil disobedience. This experience is especially relevant given the fact that the Stansted 15’s trial, which took place in 2018,

demonstrated a strategy of cracking down on direct action by maximising penalties through terrorism charges (BBC News, 2019; BBC News, 2018). Smoke therefore argues that:

[Extinction Rebellion's] notion that 2,000 arrests will evoke the kind of systemic change needed to fight climate change is naive at best. At a time when the government has cracked down on protest, to not see that this could go the other way, and be used simply as a way of increasing already draconian anti-protest legislation and prosecutions, is shortsighted and irresponsible (Smoke, 2019).

Cowan (2019) argues further that apart from the immediately practical concerns, the rhetoric of aiming to get arrested to disrupt the system, "is characteristic of XR's campaign literature, [and] fails to recognise that the very institutions they are so keen to interact with such as police and prisons, have been systematically killing people of colour and lacerating our communities since day one." This whitewashing of climate change activism risks "alienat[ing] certain people who may have more to lose by being arrested than others" such as "immigrants, whose visa status could be affected by a criminal record, or black people, who 2018 figures suggested, are more likely to have force used against them by the Metropolitan Police" (Rannard, 2019).

A pacifist legacy: how principles are still at the heart of the backfire dynamic

The concept of voluntary suffering or self-sacrifice stems from Gandhi's theory and practice and nonviolent resistance is highly influenced by his idea of this phenomenon (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 6; Terchek, 2000, 184). Although Gandhi is in his writings almost obsessively focused on self-perfection through ascetic practices and abstentions in the private life of a *satyagrahi*, the overriding focus with voluntary suffering is to secure the attention and hopefully sympathy of the oppressor and other audiences in society through very public and visible displays of voluntary suffering (McLaughlan, 2016, 433; Terchek, 2000. 183).

More recently, some authors argue that the strategic, "modern tradition of civil resistance" differs from pacifism's focus on "moral demands", including the move from calls for voluntary suffering towards backfire dynamics and "repression management" (Engler and Engler, 2014; Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 14-15). An important difference is the "strong spiritual component in Gandhi's" thoughts on personal sacrifice, whereas the strategic approach has, the argument goes, adopted a

more “practical” view on the effects of suffering violent repression by simply looking at the results in empirical studies of resistance movements (Engler and Engler, 2014). I argue, however, that the split between principled and strategic pacifism is not as clear as claimed, and that the situation of violence against protesters is in fact one of the aspects of nonviolent resistance in which the blurriness of these lines is particularly important and influential. One aspect of this is that even in more “practical” or “strategic” discussions of the effects of violence against protesters, the results of the resisters’ suffering are much the same as in the spiritual, religious, or ethical narratives of voluntary suffering.

For example, even though recent nonviolence literature emphasises the move away from focusing on conversion as the mechanism to achieve a campaign’s goal and towards coercion through leveraging pressure and withdrawing consent (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 42-46; Isserman, 1986, 47; Martin, 2015, 154; Stiehm, 1968, 24), when it comes to the function that voluntary suffering and repression may serve for a nonviolent campaign, conversion continues to be of central importance. This discussion goes back to Richard Gregg, a student of Gandhi who developed the concept of “moral jiu-jitsu” from Gandhi’s thoughts on voluntary suffering as a way to convert the opponent and liberate both resister and oppressor (Chakrabarty, 2006, 67; Kosek, 2005, 1319, 1329; Martin, 2015, 148; Tercek, 2000, 183; Vinthagen, 2015, 212). With Gregg’s theories came also the beginning of the attempt to move discussions of violence against protesters from “ethical or religious principle[s]” about virtuous self-sacrifice and towards a strategic method and study of social action (Kosek, 2005, 1320). However, Gregg’s theory of moral jiu-jitsu is still heavily focused on converting the opponent or perpetrator of the violence rather than other audiences (Gregg, 1936, 25-26; Vinthagen, 2015, 213). While subsequent writers have developed the concept, often giving it a different name, the theory of moral jiu-jitsu remains influential to the study of backfire, and is widely seen as the starting point for this theory (Martin, 2015, 149). For this reason, some of the basic assumptions which make up the argument for moral jiu-jitsu are analysed and discussed in this chapter along with discussions of backfire dynamics.

In more recent theories, in contrast, it is different audiences or groups of bystanders – either neutral or supportive of the movement but not yet actively involved – who need converting (Engler and Engler, 2014). Gene Sharp developed the concept of “political jiu-jitsu”, adding to moral jiu-jitsu by widening the scope from moral dynamics and individual psychology to one including “political

and social dimensions” (Gregg, 1936, 25-26; Martin, 2015, 150; Sharp and Finkelstein, 1973, 657-658; Vinthagen, 2015, 213). At this point, the theories of the situation of violence against nonviolent protesters moved from a focus on converting the perpetrator of violence to focusing on the reaction and sympathy of bystanders and witnesses (Martin, 2015, 150). While this is certainly a different mechanism, it is hardly one which removes all normatively influenced assumptions about causal mechanisms, since the process depends on converting bystanders from neutral, passive, or supportive of the opponent, to feeling sympathy and solidarity with the resistance movement and supporting them in some way.

Brian Martin introduced the “backfire model” as his conceptualisation of the dynamics around violence against protesters. The backfire model builds on the concepts and theories outlined above while adding several new dimensions (Martin, 2015, 160). For one, Martin (*ibid*, 160-161) expands on previous theories by incorporating several possible processes and outcomes into the model, instead of assuming that the same action will lead to the same reaction. This makes repression backfire a dynamic and evolving process in which both sides have a number of tactics and counter-tactics available, and “struggles may evolve as each side becomes familiar with the opponent’s tactics” (*ibid*, 161). For nonviolent campaigns, this makes it important to know and practice “repression management”, which, if successful, will turn violent repression into an advantage for the movement through “preparation, mobilization, strategy, and tactical choice” (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 14-15, emphasis removed). It is in part within this field of possible ways to “manage” repression that by focusing solely on a narrow conception of backfire, nonviolence literature has limited the range of choices described as available to protesters when responding or reacting to repression.

Importantly, there are two key requirements for outrage over repression to occur: firstly, that a significant number of people find the violence against a resistance movement wrong or unfair; and second, that information about the event reaches “receptive audiences”, that is, groups of people likely to find the event wrong (Martin, 2015, 155). The role and reactions of different audiences is important in literature on repression backfire and for concrete tactical choices for a nonviolent movement (e.g., Farrell et al., 2019, 104). This chapter will not, however, be focusing explicitly on different audiences, since the aim of the chapter is to examine more general assumptions behind audience reactions, such as becoming convinced of the dedication of the

protesters or feeling sympathy for them. This focus spans the boundaries of different audiences, although it is worth noting that since the case studies are all movements within liberal democracies, as discussed in Chapter One, this has some impact on specific arguments about sympathy for not only a resistance campaign, but also the state opponent.

In backfire theories, this conversion of audiences to a standpoint of solidarity, and support, is achieved through a number of different mechanisms. These mechanisms are not simple prescriptions to follow strategically, but rather biased, political, and at times prejudiced or violent dynamics. The argument here is that this influences nonviolent resistance and should influence how nonviolence theory views and grapples with situations of violence against protesters.

Proving your dedication and commitment

The first of these mechanisms is that public and voluntary suffering is supposed to display to audiences how committed and dedicated the nonviolent resisters are (Gregg, 1936, 25, 30-31). For example, Engler and Engler write for *Waging Nonviolence* on this:

Movements are primed to flare up when participants demonstrate the seriousness of their commitment. One main way of doing this is through showing a willingness to endure hardship and inconvenience, to face arrest, or even risk physical harm in dramatizing an injustice (Engler and Engler, 2014).

Vinithagen (2015, 212) also emphasises this relationship between public suffering and dedication when he defends Gandhi's glorification of suffering, which could be "misinterpreted" as "praise for suffering itself". However, Vinithagen (*ibid*) argues that what the concept really entails is that "suffering is powerful if it stems from a conviction about the truth". In other words, suffering becomes powerful by stemming from conviction, and therefore, the ability to withstand suffering displays the conviction and dedication of the nonviolent resister who must be prepared to lose everything except their honour to "set the power of truth free".

Extinction Rebellion emphasised heavily how their strategy of civil disobedience worked not only through creating disruption and using that to pressure for change, but also by demonstrating the dedication, and therefore the worthiness of the protesters (Farrell et al., 2019, 101). In fact, as Joyce (2020, 394) writes, members of Extinction Rebellion argue that the disruption of their strategy only works if combined with a willingness to suffer and display vulnerability. Joyce (*ibid*) argues that

the idea of “intentional vulnerability” is at the centre of XR’s mass civil disobedience tactics, with the achieved disruption being secondary. They write further that “[t]he disruption, then, simply sets the stage for the symbolism of fearless sacrifice. It is the sacrifice that brings about the social change, not the disruption in itself” (*ibid*). Hallam writes of this display of dedication that “[e]veryone loves an underdog narrative. It’s the great archetypal story in all cultures: against all odds, the brave go into battle against evil. Breaking the rules gets you attention and shows the public and the elite that you are serious and unafraid” (Farrell et al., 2019, 101).

Inviting sympathy

Another function of public suffering or repression is to achieve conversion of previously neutral or inactive “bystanders”, not through impressing them with the commitment of the movement, but by inviting empathy and sympathy, which will activate their conscience (Engler and Engler, 2014). This is similar to Gandhi’s arguments that the nonviolent resister can, through voluntary suffering, communicate their arguments and cause in a more urgent way than “abstract reasoning” can do (Terchek, 2000, 184). This assumption demonstrates the influence of bias, cultural ideas of proximity, and violent or oppressive structures which shape ideas of who an observer can identify with.

Making heroes and martyrs

Finally, backfire theories argue that risking repression can become a “moment of personal transformation” for a protester, because being faced with risk enables them to clarify their own sense of their commitment (Engler and Engler, 2014). This focus on narrating repression and violence as a moment of personal transformation has an important strategic purpose of preparing activists for these risks and attempting to “reframe repression meaningfully before and after it happens” (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 305). Despite this practical function, the process of preparing activists for repression and training them to react to this in the way thought most likely to result in repression backfire, is another area in which the inseparability of more recent theories and the ethical, moral, spiritual, and religious roots of this phenomenon become clear.

To this effect, Kurtz and Smithey (2018a, 305) argue that one way to frame repression as meaningful is by “tapping into the resonance of cultural themes of sacrifice” during training and preparation sessions. In the same volume, George Lakey (*ibid*, 272) writes in more depth about

different ways for movement cultures to be created and shaped to help activists and movements overcome – or even thrive from – repression. Lahey (*ibid*, 272, 278) writes that “[s]trategists and trainers need to think carefully about whether a movement’s culture includes stories about pain and suffering that offer a positive and transformative meaning” which can be done for example through “religion-based frameworks”, “the portrayal of martyrdom”, “placing sacrifice within a narrative of spiritual development”, and “linking risk with self-esteem”. The final point about self-esteem is discussed further in the section about the movement hierarchies springing from the elevated status of certain forms of public repression and suffering over other kinds of involvement, sacrifice, and dedication to a movement.

Extinction Rebellion are an example of this use of spiritual, religious, and ethical themes in their rhetoric and materials for activists. Roger Hallam writes that although Extinction Rebellion are based on an adherence to strategic nonviolence literature and developing effective tactics, the people that are the most successful with civil disobedience actions are not the ones focused on the outcome, but the ones inspired by “traditional virtue ethics” such as “duty, honour, tradition and glory” (Farrell et al., 2019, 104). The movement also maintains strong links to Christian traditions in their focus on “intentional vulnerability” and “symbolism of fearless sacrifice” (Joyce, 2020, 392-393). These links to not only Christianity, but a wider spiritual tradition, are also clear when the group’s founding document, the *Declaration of Rebellion*, states that “[i]t becomes not only our right but our sacred duty to rebel” (Farrell et al., 2019, 2). Later in their Extinction Rebellion handbook, the group also writes that civil disobedience and “courting arrest”:

is the self-sacrificial idea of arrest at the core of Extinction Rebellion’s strategy, and it gives you strength from within. Ancient values are overtly resurrected in this Easter rebellion in London: the values of chivalry and honour, faith in life and being in service to Our Lady, Notre Dame, Mother Earth, the mother on whom everything else depends (Farrell et al., 2019, 96).

While strategic nonviolence researchers have developed a language and framework which uses less normatively loaded language, the argument here is that these theories contain an inherent glorification of the very public and performative suffering that the concept of self-sacrifice refers to. This glorification speaks strongly to purist, moralistic, and religious roots of the field of nonviolence. The argument here is therefore that although strategic violence theory may aim to be descriptive

rather than normative (simply pointing to what is observed to work well to achieve defined goals), this process remains normative both in its causal explanations and its results.

The glorification of (certain forms of) suffering

Not every form of voluntary suffering is treated as equal or valuable in nonviolence literature. This hierarchy goes back as far as Gandhi's views on suffering and personal sacrifice, which reject isolationist self-suffering and highlights instead the importance of visibility and public attention (Kosek, 2005, 1325; Terchek, 2000, 183). Gandhi was also very dismissive of what he called "involuntary suffering", which he saw as a form of suffering which can help uphold an oppressive ruler's power instead of challenge it (Kosek, 2005, 1325; Terchek, 2000, 183). This disregard for forms of everyday and less visible suffering has consequences not only for what forms of resistance work are valued, but also for how dedicated a movement member is seen to be, since the actual ability to participate in public, visible, and dramatic instances of personal sacrifice is impacted by the amount of invisible violence and repression an individual has to overcome on a daily basis. While the importance of visibility is obvious when trying to achieve public attention and sympathy, an exaggerated emphasis on this risks marginalising or hiding other important functions of nonviolent resistance, which are not all dependent on converting a bystanding public. Ben Smoke writes that:

There's undoubtedly something sexy about direct action. As activists we spend our life trying to agitate for change in a system built to resist it. Wins are rare, and the day-to-day grind of trying to transform the world into a better place – one that works for everyone – bears down on all of us. To take part in something material, that feels real, as if you're actually doing something, is overwhelmingly attractive (Smoke, 2019).

Highly visible and public, high-risk actions are then for a number of reasons going to also maintain a high status within nonviolence theory and practice. However, as Smoke (2019) also points out, this does not mean that they are necessarily the most effective form of activism or resistance, especially not if glorified at the expense of other work and tactics. Civil disobedience actions are, if met with repression, going to induce a massive cost to not only the activists arrested, but the entire movement through support work, bureaucracy, and so on (*ibid*). Because of this, direct action and high-risk protests "should only make up a tiny portion of our work as activists"

(*ibid*) not be the be-all and end-all of proving the dedication of the movement and individual activists.

In addition, the glorification of this particular form of personal suffering as an ultimate display of dedication and conviction risks creating or reinforcing a hierarchy within nonviolent movements, in which those protesters who undertake the most publicly visible and risky actions are at the top and seen as the most dedicated and valuable members of the movement. This, however, ignores differences in ability to take risks, for any number of reasons, differences in how risky the same action is – as discussed in the Extinction Rebellion example earlier – and the fact that visibility is not the only measure for how risky an action is, as well as the fact that taking risks is not necessarily the only way to have and show dedication to a cause. As Smoke (2019) acknowledges after having been arrested themselves for a direct action, there is an “inherent privilege in being able to be arrested”. And as the debates around Extinction Rebellion demonstrate, these different levels of privilege and risk are not always acknowledged in nonviolent movements when deciding on tactics and rhetoric.

The ability of highly visible and publicised suffering to raise the profile and importance of individual activists relates back to the theme of the lone male heroes of nonviolence, as discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis and is a common theme in histories of nonviolent resistance in general (Engler and Engler, 2014). For example, Frankel (2001, 4-5) argues that part of the reason that Nelson Mandela is so widely recognised and admired is because of the “mystique of suffering” and that “there would be little to nothing of Mandela without Robben Island” and the narrative of heroically enduring hardship in pursuit of justice. Another example of the glorified narrative of (certain forms of) suffering is Martin Luther King, Jr., whose ideas of “the political, transformative power of suffering did not come from just his Christianity but also from Gandhi”, a view which emphasised endurance through suffering as a path to justice, as well as the importance of maintaining love for the opponent no matter their levels of violence and repression (Vinthagen, 2015, 211). In addition, the theme is relevant to the discussion in the following chapter on violence within nonviolent movements, in which some of the everyday forms of violence and suffering which are disregarded by voluntary suffering theories are brought up as crucially important by negatively impacting the running and functioning of nonviolent resistance movements.

Lakey, in a book chapter about how to train and prepare activists for repression,

recommends tapping into this theme to encourage activists in taking risks (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 281-282). This is done along with the calls for trainers and facilitators to use religious and ethical narratives to frame risk and repression as “martyrdom”, a way to achieve “spiritual development”, or to raise one’s self-esteem, as discussed earlier in the chapter (*ibid*, 272, 278). Lakey writes on the topic of encouraging more movement members to participate in higher risk events than they have so far:

Movements often find themselves calling on participants to risk more. As a result, we sometimes see participants performing acts that they would not have considered a year or two earlier ... Movements support this dynamic when they celebrate those who risk boldly. They shift the meaning of being hurt by repression from victimhood to the experience of, for example, a *‘heroic nonviolent soldier’*. They encourage those who are ready to risk more – who may be few in the beginning – and in that way cultivate the contrast between *exemplary* suffering and *minimal* suffering. *This stimulates the low-risker’s comparison of others’ sacrifice with her or his own, a calculus within a frame of self-esteem* (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 281-282, my emphasis).

This promotion of the image of activists who participate in publicly high-risk activities as “heroes” and the framing of self-esteem as being tied to (certain forms of) risk-taking may, according to Lakey, have the effect of making movement members ask what “more” they can do, with more meaning taking further risks (Kurtz and Smithey, 2018a, 281-282). What this argument does not mention or take into account is that a nonviolent movement is likely to consist not only of people who are “willing” or “brave enough” to take different levels of risk, but rather, members for whom the same actions entail different levels of risk, and members with different abilities to take risks altogether.

The power of sympathy – romantic narratives of shared humanity

Apart from different abilities or opportunities to take risks and participate in public, dramatic acts of voluntary suffering, there are also significant differences in what such suffering will achieve, or how much suffering will be required to achieve goals. This is explored in the present section through the concrete dynamic of creating sympathy within audiences, and a complication of what the

process of encouraging sympathy and solidarity entails. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, creating sympathy in audiences is one of the central dynamics through which the suffering of nonviolent protesters may lead to repression backfire. What is at stake here is what Gregg calls the “power of sympathy”, which happens especially “if the suffering continues long” and if leaders of a movement also suffer (Gregg, 1936, 84; Kosek, 2005, 1329). Gregg suggests that sympathy arises when causing or witnessing suffering because humans are evolved to react to the pain of other humans, and because there is a potential to identify with the victim (Kosek, 2005, 1319, 1329-1330; Martin, 2015, 148). Similarly, Gandhi’s idea of voluntary suffering is based on the assumption that other people do not “relish witnessing suffering in others and will eventually do what they can to bring it to an end” (Terchek, 2000, 184) and Vinthagen (2015, 213) argues that the conversion of “the heart” in Gandhi’s conception of voluntary suffering is “an attempt to *resolve the emotional blocks or social distance between conflicting parties*” by creating “empathy, sympathy, perspective or trust”.

Martin (2015, 158) refers to this, in a more strategic framing, as the process of “managing outrage” by both protesters and opponent. What is needed to be able to create outrage – by managing the situation well – is for accounts of the repressive violence to reach “receptive audiences” and for a significant part of these audiences to find the violence wrong or unfair (*ibid*, 155). Similarly, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011, 50) write that backfire can happen “if the [nonviolent] campaigns have widespread sympathy among the civilian population”. Although these dynamics are recognised as a less predictable mechanism than appeals to common human reactions in Gregg’s and Gandhi’s thinking because “not all people react to events in the same way”, it is still argued that “it is clearly observable that some events cause an adverse reaction in a wide cross-section of the population” (Reis and Martin, 2008, 6). In other words, backfire theory has more recently moved away from making universal assumptions about a “human” reaction to observing or perpetrating violence. However, the theory still treats the processes of sympathy and solidarity that underpin the different processes of backfire as sufficiently predictable to be relied on for planning and teaching nonviolent resistance (Martin, 2012; Martin, 2015, 161; Reis and Martin, 2008, 7, 19). Given that this is done without including bias, inequality, and different perceptions about what constitutes unjust or excessive repressive violence, the assumption becomes in practice that these

processes can be considered universal or neutral, despite nonviolence theory moving away from direct phrasings of common human reactions and experiences.

This development further underlines the argument that although more recent literature on nonviolent resistance attempts to move the topic into a strategic realm in which moral principles or arguments appear irrelevant and therefore not open to critique, this is not the case. Backfire literature has moved from fairly simplistic and moralistic accounts of a universal human response to witnessing suffering, to later theories of more diverse reactions such as moral outrage, solidarity, and perceptions of justice – reactions which are still relatively scarcely researched (Reis and Martin, 2008, 6; Saab et al., 2015, 539). However, values and norms are still at stake here. Processes of eliciting solidarity and sympathy, whether on a personal or social scale, are inherently a question of norms, principles, and world views, and therefore, theories and mechanisms which are based on these processes should not avoid them. The present discussion will also argue that the concept of sympathy is in itself limited by bias and structures of prejudice and marginalisation, and that these are important to understand in order to come to terms with both the workings and limitations of theorising the effects of violence against resistance campaigns.

In *Precarious Life*, Butler (2004, 20) complicates assumptions about common human reactions to suffering in their discussion of political grief and mourning. Rather than starting from the assumption of a constant and universal entity of the “human”, with universal or common “human reactions”, they question how certain people are seen to count – or not count – as “human”, and with that, have lives that count (*ibid*). In other words, Butler uses the concept of the human and human experience to interrogate a socially and culturally determined idea of who is included in the supposedly universal and equalising “human experience”, rather than assume the existence of a shared and unifying experience between all humans, as is seen especially in early discussions of repression backfire. As a part of this interrogation, they (*ibid*, 32) discuss the reactions to losses of life in Afghanistan or the US, and asks “What are the cultural contours of the human at work here? How do our cultural frames for thinking the human set limits on the kinds of losses we can avow as loss?”. Butler (*ibid*, 30) introduces the idea that lives are made to be more or less “grievable” based on cultural, social, and political narratives. This is an important complication of the argument of sympathy and identification, which is at the core of the process of converting bystanders or other audiences to support a resistance movement.

Writing in the context of the aftermath of the 9/11 attack, Butler (2004, 32) argues that some lives (privileged lives in the Global North) “will be highly protected, and the abrogation of their claims to sanctity will be sufficient to mobilize the forces of war”, as seen with the invasions following 9/11. “Other lives [however] will not find such fast and furious support and will not even qualify as ‘grievable’” (*ibid*). As an example, while many of the victims from the World Trade Center were “humanized” through obituaries and naming, Palestinian victims of Israeli military violence, or Afghan victims of the U.S. invasion are not, if discussed at all, given “names and faces, personal histories” and so on, but become numbers in statistics (*ibid*). A response to this is seen in the Black Lives Matter movement’s campaigns – such as #SayHerName – to name victims of police violence and humanise them in the public sphere through stories of their lives (Black Lives Matter, 2016; Maxouris, 2020).

Beyond the discussion of the vastly different response to the loss of human lives in the U.S. and Afghanistan in the context of 9/11, there is a wider “racial differential that undergirds the culturally viable notions of the human” (Butler, 2004, 33). This is what Hooker (2016, 459) refers to as “racialized solidarity”, an effect which means that “[r]ace has historically impeded upon the recognition that fellow citizens who are racial others deserve the same care, concern, respect, or even that the harms they suffer merit the same attention”. This dynamic of solidarity “has been the norm in existing liberal democracies” (*ibid*). This is important to the functioning of repression backfire, because, as Kurtz and Smithey (2018b) argue, “[i]n order for insurgents to invoke the sympathy and outrage of bystander publics, these publics must relate to and identify with the target of repression”. This is not a neutral or universal requirement, however, as Butler demonstrates, when they write of their reaction to the murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan:

Daniel Pearl, ‘Danny’ Pearl, is so familiar to me: he could be my brother or my cousin; he is so easily humanized; he fits the frame, his name has my father’s name in it. His last name contains my Yiddish name. But those lives in Afghanistan, or other United States targets, who were also snuffed out brutally and without recourse to any protection, will they ever be as human as Daniel Pearl? ... We should surely continue to grieve for Daniel Pearl, even though he is so much more easily humanized for most United States citizens than the nameless Afghans obliterated by United States and European violence (Butler, 2004, 37).

It is not, therefore, an attempt to condemn different reactions based on the perceived proximity or relatability of a victim that is at stake here; but with an understanding of these mechanisms comes also an argument that they are not necessarily pre-social ideas of similarity and identification, but rather social and cultural norms, “circumscribed and produced in these acts of permissible and celebrated public grieving”, and, importantly, that these norms “operate in tandem with a prohibition on the public grieving of others’ lives” (Butler, 2004, 37). What this does is establish a narrative in which this familiar human that the observer or public can identify with becomes the standard for making a life matter (*ibid*, 38).

This questioning of what makes someone “human” in the sense of having their life count, and whether this requirement can be dismantled rather than adapted to strategically, is a radically different approach than what is seen in parts of nonviolence and voluntary suffering theories. For example, in Vinthagen’s (2015, 216) discussion of suffering, the merit of voluntary suffering is exactly that it may move protesters from categories such as “‘non-people’, ‘God’s enemies’, ‘treacherous’, ‘rats’, ‘cockroaches’, ‘dirty’, ‘barbarians’, ‘idiots’ or ‘animals’” into a category of human beings worthy of attention and care. Because of this potential, Vinthagen (*ibid*, 215) argues that “Gandhi’s thesis about the political role of suffering in the liberation struggle was developed in specific social contexts – segregated South Africa and colonial India – characterised by racism and ethnic superiority and inferiority”. In other words, for groups who in their present social and cultural settings are placed in a category of “not people” or “lesser people”, he claims that Gandhi’s thoughts on and practice of voluntary suffering is particularly useful and powerful, because this exemplary public suffering – which shows “the humanity, civility and egalitarianism of the subalterns” (Vinthagen, 2015, 215) – may humanise them in the eyes of their oppressors and neutral or complicit bystanders. In contrast, others argue that this extremely racialised and unequal context is one in which self-sacrifice and suffering is inappropriate (Hooker, 2016, 462). Hooker (*ibid*) also critiques a strategy of accepting the requirement that an oppressed group have to “prove” their humanity through suffering in order to earn social justice.

In a journal article on possible psychological explanations and models for creating outrage and repression backfire, Reis and Martin (2008, 13-14) discuss the impact that different “framings” of a victim and perpetrator can have on audience perceptions of the justice of a situation by attributing blame to either the victim or the perpetrator of violence. The authors argue that a

bystander with a “strong belief in a just world” will be less likely to feel sympathy for the victim, or attribute blame to the perpetrator, because of this belief that the world (or their society) is inherently just (*ibid*, 13). This is, they argue, “enhanced when the victim is actively devalued by the attacking group (especially in terms of defamation of character)” (*ibid*). The discussion does not include, however, an acknowledgement of the impact that political bias, structural prejudice, and so on, will have on audiences’ views on the value or worth of a victim of repressive violence. Although nonviolent resisters can, Reis and Martin (*ibid*, 14) argue, attempt to influence this dynamic and heighten the chance of “generating sympathy from observers” through “framing the character of the victim”, the obstacles to doing so and the chances of succeeding are vastly different depending on the grievance group in question and this is not elaborated on by the authors.

An example of such obstacles is the discourse around victims of police violence in the US, violence which for the Black Lives Matter movement is both a cause of their protests and what these protests are met with. As Hooker (2016, 460-461) writes, Black Americans are placed in systems of bias and prejudice which mean they are already less likely to be thought of with sympathy, regardless of any active attempts to frame the victim as deserving or not deserving of sympathy. They write:

This dynamic is evident in the dissection of the pasts of unarmed black victims of police violence, even children (as in the cases of Aiyana Stanley-Jones and Tamir Rice), for evidence of criminality in order to claim that they were not innocent and were thus mainly or partly responsible for their own deaths. The problem is that if white solidarity requires black innocence, then the goalposts for racial justice continually shift because every specific instance of injustice becomes a discussion of whether or not a black victim was ‘deserving’ (Hooker, 2016, 460-461).

The argument in Reis and Martin’s article (2008, 13-14) that theories and understandings of managing outrage can simply make use of these dynamics rather than question them has, then, obvious and serious consequences. This can be seen also in the discussion of a study by Friedman and Austin on the impact of positive or negative information about a victim on audience reactions. Reis and Martin summarise how the study found:

more sympathy and less derogation for an imaginary hit-and-run victim framed as a

distinguished researcher (positive condition) compared to a sensationalistic, self-interested researcher (negative condition) or a researcher with routine accomplishments (neutral condition). They also varied the level of suffering supposedly experienced by the imaginary victim, with the finding that, in the positive condition, as suffering increased, so did sympathy for and attraction to the victim. In the negative condition, however, derogatory responses increased steadily as suffering increased (Reis and Martin, 2008, 13).

This then leaves a model of “managing outrage” based on these mechanisms with an implication that if an audience – whether actively encouraged to or not – has negative ideas of the victim’s character, they may in fact react with less care the more violence the victim is exposed to. In contexts such as a highly racialised society and high rates of racialised police violence, the consequences of this cannot justifiably be ignored, even with an argument of achieving short-term goals. In the case of the Black Lives Matter movement, the impossibility of using these dynamics rather than fundamentally question the requirement that a victim of repressive and excessive violence be “worthy” of sympathy, is even clearer, since this would work directly against the aims and goals of the movement.

In a later piece on backfire, Martin (2015, 156) does address some of the wider systems and mechanisms which impact the chance of sympathy for victims of repressive violence. He writes that “[w]hen the targets of attack are of low status or stigmatized by allegations, such as being called terrorists or criminals, then what is done to them may not seem so serious. But if the targets are highly valued, then outrage will be greater” (*ibid*). Although Martin does not mention this, the discussion of who may be counted as valued and having prestige is closely linked to the concept of respectability politics. Martin writes:

Protesters typically have higher status when they behave in a dignified fashion, dress respectably, and have prestige because of their occupations or accomplishments. Police know it looks much worse to beat and shoot business executives, Buddhist priests, or Catholic nuns than protesters who look scruffy and dress strangely (Martin, 2015, 156).

The 2014 article *Affect and Respectability Politics* by Michelle Smith problematises a number of aspects related to uncritical uses of respectability politics for political goals. The basic logic of respectability politics are questions or views such as:

Have the police thrown you against a wall to search your pockets? Don't stand on the street looking like you're up to no good! Propriety breeds respect. Did your unarmed son/daughter/husband/wife/best friend/cousin die after the police applied the chokehold too vigorously? Cooler heads will prevail! (Smith, 2014).

This fails, however, to address the systemic and structural oppressions and violence at the root of the violence that took place, which have very little to do with the actual behaviour, dress, speech, or demeanour of the victim. Smith (2014) discusses a number of conversations in the wake of the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson and the subsequent protests, all of which demonstrate in some way the impact that a requirement for respectability politics can have on protest and political displays of outrage. While all of these were not discussions over outcomes, since all participants “want the unjustified use of lethal force to stop”, Smith describes how to proponents of respectability politics:

the critical theorizing and deliberate action of the young men and women (and boys and girls) who make up the Lost Voices, with their neck tattoos, XXXL white t-shirts, sagging pants, dread locks, outdoor voices, hip hop ethos and civil disobedience-rejecting rage, is either unintelligible as politics or unworthy of attention (Smith, 2014).

In these arguments, the popular narrative and the actual strategies of the 1960s civil rights movement, which did make use of respectability politics to raise their profile, is often used, with references to the image of “tastefully dressed blacks confronting police dogs and water canon with calm demeanors standing in sharp and unambiguous contrast to white faces contorted by unreasoning rage” (Smith, 2014). The invocation of the civil rights movements demonstrates that while there are, as mentioned above, systemic and structural factors which mean that respectability politics – as Martin calls for to increase outrage – are inherently more available to some actors than to others, this does not mean that marginalised or vilified groups have no possibilities of pursuing respectability. However, this “romantic narrative of the civil rights movement” as the epitome of respectability and democratic virtue through accepting democratic loss, may end up foreclosing “other (possibly more radical) forms of black politics” as “both illegitimate and ineffective”, or resistance movements in general which reject respectability and acceptance of suffering as the necessary and legitimate price to be paid for social justice (Hooker, 2016, 457-458). As both Smith

(2014) and Hooker (2016) point out, this is not merely a tension between Black Americans (in the present case) and the rest of the US, but also a question of different groupings, interests, and strategies within the Black community. Smith for example asks with regard to the respectability proponents she discusses:

More provocatively still, doesn't their refusal to acknowledge the testimony of (urban) black youth about the injustice of police action, whether spoken or performed, indicate that neither considers urban youth worthy of consideration? (Smith, 2014).

This leads to a rejection of "black rage, especially that of the black underclass" (Smith, 2014). Similarly, Hooker (2016, 465) argues that the "rejection of the politics of respectability and insistence that 'all black lives matter' by the Black Lives Matter protesters, for example, point toward a more radical critique of the carceral state that rejects the distinction between law-abiding middle-class black citizens and always-already criminalized black 'thugs' in urban ghettos".

A pass to a world of equality: challenging sacrifice as democratic excellence

The narrative that choosing to suffer for a cause is a price that *should* have to be paid by already marginalised communities to achieve further equality should not go unchallenged. Hooker (2016, 451) explains that a core part of certain theories of democracy is democratic loss, that is, the fact that some citizens have to give up needs or wishes in service of the public or community. This creates the ideal of "democratic sacrifice" as a virtue, that is "citizens who cope with the experience of loss in an exemplary fashion" (*ibid*, 451-452). Citizens who practice democratic sacrifice are seen as "key to democratic stability", and the 1960s civil rights movement is used at times as an exemplary example of such virtuous democratic sacrifice (*ibid*, 452). However, as Hooker (*ibid*) argues, theories of democratic sacrifice carry a risk of forgetting – as the praise of the civil rights movement exemplifies – to "challenge the disproportionate distribution of loss", in which case the praise of exemplary performances of democratic sacrifice may instead reinforce and perpetuate this entrenched inequality. In their article, Hooker (*ibid*, 454-455) then attempts to critique not only the promotion of one possible resistance tactic – the performance of exemplary citizenship through democratic loss – but also the very ideas and system which demand such "extraordinary sacrifices from the citizens least positioned to make such 'gifts'".

This combination of respectability politics and democratic sacrifice is what leads Hooker (2016, 458, 460) to critique, in the context of Black protest in the United States, the “mistaken theoretical account of white moral psychology that assumes that exemplary forms of political activism by racialized minorities induce positive ethical transformations in members of the dominant racial group”, without taking the effects of racialised solidarity into account. In other words, it is a mistake to assume that “peaceful”, “forgiving”, or “nonviolent” responses to violence against Black Americans will be sure to create a rise in sympathy among white Americans simply by appealing to their conscience or sympathy. Instead, it can create “resentment and defensiveness” (*ibid*, 459-460). It can also be questioned, however, whether this idea of performing an idealised reaction to suffering, violence, and inequality, should be accepted as an entry-pass towards equality, even if it does at times achieve some advances.

Again, the popular narrative of the civil rights movement as the ideal protest movement has been instrumental, especially in the US. The narrative of the civil rights movement as the model for exemplary citizenship, earning increases in equality through voluntary suffering while also improving society as a whole, narrows the perception of what an acceptable protest or resistance movement is, and creates the expectation that they should be “socially acceptable” in the first place (e.g. Banks, 2018, 713; Hooker, 2016, 451-452). This narrative has, amongst other things, been used to delegitimise contemporary protest movements, notably the Black Lives Matter movement (Banks, 2018, 710; Hooker, 2016, 450, 456). This delegitimation happens because of a refusal from the Black Lives Matter movement to accept suffering without question or complaint as the price that should be paid for equality (Hooker, 2016, 450, 456). This is not, of course, the same as arguing that Black Lives Matter organisers do not understand and accept that police violence against protesters may be necessary in order for the movement to protest and progress; that is, that it is a necessary step or price. However, there is a significant difference between that and accepting that equality is not already earned and owed, and therefore, that it has to be earned through exemplary citizenship and democratic sacrifice. As Hooker (*ibid*, 456) argues, a request for democratic sacrifice to be performed to earn progress would mean that when “white public opinion has not become uniformly mobilized in support of the Black Lives Matter protests against police violence”, this would be the fault of the protesters for failing “to make visible to a white audience the reality of an unjust criminal justice system via the willing sacrifice of their innocent, non-resisting bodies to racial

violence". Further, Hooker (*ibid*, 461) questions whether the requirement of excessive democratic sacrifice should in fact be read, not as sacrifice, but as "black submission" being "the price of white acquiescence to steps toward racial equality, which suggests a much different account of the impact of these gestures on white moral orientation". An alternative line of resistance could feasibly be the refusal to accept more suffering from racial violence – whether "voluntary" or "involuntary" – and a struggle to have the Black victims of police violence recognised as worthy of sympathy and solidarity without further requirements, and whether that is in part what Black Lives Matter do and are judged for.

Atkins (2019) argues, in fact, that the Black Lives Matter movement is in some ways more meaningfully compared to the Black Power movement than the 1960s civil rights movement. Perhaps this comparison is not made as much because of the perceived strength of the violence-nonviolence dichotomy when it comes to tactics, and this means that similarities in aims and fundamental views on how to achieve change are missed. Atkins (*ibid*, 7) states that the call for Black power was a significant difference to the civil rights movement of Martin Luther King, Jr. because:

It was power – in some cases political control – that was at issue, not freedom. To call for Black Power was to abandon appeals to conscience and, so, to implicitly recognize the failures of these appeals, to demand a place in political life whether that seemed good (or timely) to whites, and to abandon the shared pursuit of the freedom promised to all (since it is power that people can have over you, not freedom) (Atkins, 2019, 7).

Another feature of holding or gaining power is, of course, that progress or freedoms do not have to be "earned" because they do not have to be granted. This, then, constitutes an approach to solving the problem of the requirement of democratic sacrifice in order to earn further freedoms or protections, and a different option – strategy if you will – for not only Black protest in the US, but for struggles for equality and justice for marginalised groups in general. The issue with a short-sighted "strategic" approach to what works best for nonviolent resistance movements is that short-term gains are less likely if a more fundamental change of the distribution of power in society is the aim. Hooker (2016, 452, 457), for example, argues that the equating of "peaceful acquiescence to the perpetual losses characteristic of a racial polity" with a necessary and stabilising "democratic loss" may in fact work against further progress towards racial equality, and perpetuate the current

“disproportionate distribution of loss”. In other words, the glorified status that voluntary suffering holds in nonviolence theory, and especially within the narrative of the civil rights movement, may in fact be preventing or limiting further gains for the racial justice movement in the United States by accepting the terms that Black Americans only deserve further rights and steps towards equality if they behave in exemplary fashion, reacting to violence with dignified and calm nonviolence and non-resistance, forgiving their opponents, and working for the betterment of the entire society rather than better conditions for themselves.

A further question is whether suffering is necessarily the most powerful statement a resister can make about their belief in what they are fighting for, as theories of voluntary suffering claim (e.g. Vinthagen, 2015, 212). Or whether a refusal to suffer, or to accept suffering, can at times be an equally powerful statement of truth and power, a defiant act as described for example by Hooker (2016, 465), who writes that by refusing to meet the expectation that Black citizens need to be “political heroes” in order to achieve further equality, “responsibility for racial justice does not lie primarily with those who have already suffered the lion’s share of the losses inflicted by racism”.

When nonviolence theory focuses exclusively, or mainly, on the situation of violence against protesters in terms of what short-term victories or gains *may* be achieved by approaching the repression the right way, and not the wider implications of not only the violence in itself, but the narratives that lie behind these short-term gains, there is a risk of missing out on other strategies for dealing with violent repression. While there is no doubt that violent repression of resistance movements will not stop completely, that does not mean that the only constructive or valid way for nonviolent movements to react to this is by putting a positive spin on the violence, and aiming at immediate backfire. Rage over the violence, condemnations over the lack of condemnation and sympathy, and calls for taking or creating their own power rather than having to perform a certain role of the exemplary repressed citizen, may all be valid strategies as well, leading to successful outcomes for nonviolent resistance movements.

Conclusion

This chapter has been reflective, in large part, of the overall argument of this thesis that nonviolence theory is highly influenced by a view of civil resistance as a form of purity politics, because it is not violent, or is free of violence. In contrast to this, the present chapter started by arguing that the

situation of repressive violence against nonviolent protesters breaks any nonviolent sphere and brings violence into the dynamic, particularly considering the importance that violence against protesters holds in the literature through voluntary suffering and backfire models. The scepticism of purist views and narratives is also reflected in the nuancing and complications of key, and often romanticised, parts of backfire theories, such as the heroic and dedicated self-sacrificer, and the power of sympathy.

The chapter also discussed an important strategic aspect, which is the question of risk. Relatively lower risk levels are one factor used to promote nonviolent resistance over armed insurgencies, because they enable wider and greater participation. This makes it even more important to acknowledge in both nonviolent theory and practice that different activists sometimes face widely unequal levels of risk for performing the same action. This is exemplified by Extinction Rebellion's tactics and their early rhetoric and handling of these, which were criticised for not understanding and acknowledging the disproportionate violence that communities of colour in the UK are exposed to by the UK police. Despite discussing this mainly strategic concern, the remainder of the chapter was occupied with demonstrating the argument that in backfire theories, strategic nonviolence does not exist outside of concerns with normative assumptions, moral consequences, and questions of justice. This was demonstrated through three of the ways in which violent repression is argued to be able to result in backfire: by proving the dedication and commitment of nonviolent activists; by inviting sympathy from observers and bystanders; and through reference to spiritual, religious, and cultural ideals of heroes and martyrdom.

The glorification of the very specific kind of suffering included in backfire theory as voluntary suffering or self-sacrifice carries with it a risk of devaluing other forms of work and other activists, in particular ones who have unequal ability to take the risks associated with high-profile public civil disobedience actions. Through this comes also a risk of creating or reinforcing hierarchies within movements. Further, as this chapter also discussed, the glorification of this performative show of dedication risks overvaluing high-risk actions which may not actually be the best use of the time, resources, and energy of both movements and individual activists.

The chapter complicated the assumptions about the sympathy which has to arise in order for a movement to increase support following an incidence of violent repression. As shown,

sympathy is not a neutral or universally human process in the sense that all humans will react to witnessing excessive violence by feeling sympathy for the victim, no matter who the victim, perpetrator, or spectator is. Rather, sympathy is negotiated by feelings of proximity and identification, politically or structurally determined ideas of “us” and “them”, a culturally specific idea of what a grievable human constitutes, and racialised prejudice and bias amongst others.

Finally, the chapter presented arguments for taking other responses to repressive violence seriously as forms of legitimate nonviolent protesting. These include a refusal to “voluntarily” suffer police violence as a moral price to pay in order to earn social justice. This was done based primarily on Hooker’s (2016) discussion of the Black Lives Matter protests in the US, and the often unfavourably intended comparisons between BLM and the 1960s civil rights movement which is used as an example of exemplary citizenship through their response to police repression and their performance of voluntary suffering. As Hooker (*ibid*, 462) argues, this has a number of problematic consequences, with the main one perhaps being the refusal to consider alternative ways to protest for racial equality. She writes that “[i]n the tragic political trap created by the transmutation of black sacrifice into democratic exemplarity, there is very little room for blacks to express outrage at injustice, or to enact a politics of defiance of their expected status as peaceful democratic losers” (*ibid*). This chapter and thesis is, of course, particularly concerned with the role of nonviolence theory and narratives in this regard, and argues that by focusing almost exclusively on backfire, or the potential for backfire, when theorising the situation of violence against nonviolent protesters, nonviolence theory risks helping with this narrowing down of options and choices.

These kinds of arguments and examinations are not an attempt to equate nonviolent resistance with violent resistance simply because violence plays a role in some way. It is, rather, as are the next two chapters, an attempt to nuance what nonviolence is, through a closer look at some of the ways in which violence still influences this form of protest and social movement organising. Similarly, critiquing the dynamic of backfire as being an at times biased and problematic mechanism relying on prejudice and structures of marginalisation does not mean that the dynamic should not be studied or used. Instead, the argument here is that through examining the ways that different forms of violence impact the backfire dynamic, theories and research may be able to mitigate or minimise these, or avoid reinforcing harmful (perhaps violent) narratives of victims deserving the violence used against them, or narratives requiring “respectability” from groups of people who will

never be allowed full respectability anyway. In addition, we may be able to develop and articulate further options for responding to repressive violence, and thereby expand the repertoire of nonviolent tactics.

Chapter Six: Violence Within Movements

In 2011, the Occupy movement started with Occupy Wall Street in New York City and quickly spread to cities across the US and around the world (Calhoun, 2013, 26-27). The movement, which started from a dissatisfaction with the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, protested economic inequality, financial greed, and the strong influence of the financial sector on national politics (Calhoun, 2013, 26-27; Gitlin, 2013, 23). Although Occupy, in the shape of the occupations of public spaces, was relatively short-lived, it received widespread attention and was hugely influential (Calhoun, 2013, 26; Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 157). Occupy is famous not only for its protest of economic inequality through clear-cut refrains such as “We are the 99%”, but also for its protest tactics, especially the central occupations of public spaces (Calhoun, 2013, 29; Gitlin, 2013, 9). Although the massive Occupy marches were an important part of the widespread attention, legitimacy, and traction that the movement was able to create, it was the occupations that became emblematic of Occupy’s identity, ethos, and vision for alternative ways of organising societies (Gitlin, 2013, 21-23).

During these occupations, however, reports started surfacing both in Occupy communication channels and in mainstream media which problematised the level of security and unrest in Occupy camps, including reports of sexual assaults and harassment perpetrated by activists in the camps (e.g. Newcomb, 2011; Knickerbocker, 2011; Hardikar, 2011; Hartmann, 2011). The impact of these incidents and reports was significant. For one, reports of violence and unrest, along with other “health and safety concerns” were used by city officials as part of their justification for forcibly breaking up and removing Occupy camps (Knickerbocker, 2011). However, an arguably more significant impact - since the protest camps would have been removed anyway, and so, the occurrence of violence was not a deciding factor in this - was the ignition of discussions within major nonviolence and social movement spaces about unequal levels of safety for activists, due to structural and systemic violence and the existence and re-creation of repression and social hierarchies from wider society within social movement spaces (Doyle, 2011).

This is the starting point of the present chapter, which examines and discusses different occurrences of violence within nonviolent movements. The starting point of sexual and gendered violence in movement spaces refers back to the highly contested category of so-called “private” violence, which was discussed in Chapter Four. The relevance of this category of private or personal

issues is pointed out by an Occupy protester who writing that “[c]omplaints of sexual harassment at the site are belittled as ‘personal problems’” (Gaeng, 2011). The discussion here aims to demonstrate how these instances of private violence do, or should, matter to a political and social movement’s nonviolent ethos.

The chapter goes beyond a limited investigation of incidents of physical, direct violence, however, and also discusses occurrences of non-material forms of violence within nonviolent movements. This broadening of the concept of violence is, as shown in Chapter Four, not universally accepted, but often controversial and contested. This contestation can happen within activist and social movement spaces as well. An example of this is the Danish activist, author, and speaker Mads Ananda Lodahl (2017), who wrote a public Facebook post with a link to an online journal article (Nimni, 2017) problematising the widening of the meaning of violence. The post read:

It has annoyed me a little that many people describe all sorts of things as ‘acts of violence’. Everything from increases in rent, over poor working conditions and gentrification, to structural issues and ugly or inconsiderate language has been given the label of ‘violence’. It is not that those things are not harmful and need to be taken seriously and fought against, but I have sometimes thought that it is people who have never themselves been beaten up, who use the word ‘violence’ in that way. For me at least, violence does not mean all sorts of different things. It means something very specific. Read the article and tell me what you think... (Lodahl, 2017)²

This comment demonstrates the tensions that arise from the fact that violence is not a clearly defined and universally agreed upon concept, tensions which become especially pronounced given the rhetorical weight of naming something as violence. That is, the claim of certain events or

² My translation. Original text in Danish reads: “Det har irriteret mig lidt, at mange folk beskriver alt muligt som ‘acts of violence’. Alt fra huslejestigninger over dårlige arbejdsforhold og gentrificering til strukturelle ting og sager og grimt eller ubetænksomt sprog har fået mærkatet ‘vold’. Det er ikke, fordi de ting ikke er skadelige og skal tages alvorligt og bekæmpes, men jeg har ind i mellem tænkt, at det er folk, der aldrig selv har fået tæsk, der bruger ordet ‘vold’ på den måde. For mig betyder vold i hvert fald ikke bare alt muligt. Det betyder noget helt specifikt. Læs artiklen og lad mig høre, hvad du synes...”

actions as instances of violence may heighten the perceived importance and urgency of an issue, because violence is so broadly agreed upon as problematic and harmful, but the same claim may also take meaning and weight out of the concept of violence, if it becomes too diluted. As Nimni (2017) for example argues - on the side of critiquing the broadening of violence to mean non-physical forms of harm - this can lead to “every bad thing [becoming] every other bad thing. Neoliberalism is white supremacy is erasure is gentrification”. While this chapter does not attempt to solve this conundrum - partly as a clear solution probably does not exist - the discussion here is especially interested in the processes around these tensions and definitional discussions.

Lodahl’s (2017) particular comment highlights an implicit hierarchy within movements in which “frontline” activists who have suffered the most direct violence and repression from opponents are at the top as the most legitimate activists, as discussed in Chapter Five, and who may, through this, be allowed to act as gatekeepers of the definition of violence, or the relevance of specific instances of violence; that gatekeeping function is certainly what seems to be implied in Lodahl’s (*ibid*) argument that only “people who have never themselves been beaten up” would think of non-physical harms as violence. This process of creating hierarchies and exclusions of certain forms of violence over others is a continuing focus within feminist scholarship and is used here as well. Feminist scholarship works for a “recognition of sexual and gender-based violence [which] continues to be hampered by social, political, and institutional views of what constitutes ‘true’ violence”, as well as the relationship between acts of violence and responses to violence (Kaladelfos and Featherstone, 2014, 234).

This tension over differing definitions of violence is arguably especially pertinent to nonviolent movements and theory, in which - as demonstrated throughout this thesis - an implied conception of violence is at the basis of what defines nonviolence as a specific mode of action. The question then becomes whether racist and sexist behaviours, or silencing of systematically marginalised groups, are violent, or at least so integrally linked to violence that they cannot be separated, and therefore an inherent issue to labelling a movement as nonviolent. The focus on non-material definitions of violence is unusual within social movements literature, which “rarely explicitly focuses on forms of violence which go beyond physical acts” (Sommier et al., 2019, 233). This chapter is an attempt to open up this conversation, partly by identifying how certain assumptions about what constitutes violence become pre-determined and not even considered as

potentially contestable. Instead, the chapter aims to bring these questions and debates to the core of nonviolence theory through a challenge of the narrow conception of violence, and the strong hierarchies of which forms of violence are relevant to nonviolence theory and practice.

The chapter will start with a brief overview of the question of private forms of violence, and violence within movements, as it has been dealt with in nonviolent activism and theory so far. Although this has only been minimally discussed, the break between feminist and pacifist groups in the 1970s and 1980s illustrate that the challenge to take private forms of violence seriously in nonviolent movements has been made before. The chapter will then discuss in more depth instances of private violence in the form of sexual and gendered violence that happened within Occupy camps, and the impact of this for nonviolent movements and theory. Following this, the discussion will focus on one particular potential condition for violence within movements – material and non-material – which is the illusion or assumption of equality between members and the ways in which this may reinforce, recreate, or lead to, forms of violence. This discussion is based both on the Occupy movement and its internal culture, but also revisits the examples of Extinction Rebellion and the Black Lives Matter movement during the discussion of internal culture and the assumption of equality. The chapter aims to argue and demonstrate throughout the discussion how these occurrences of violence, and definitional discussions around violence, impact nonviolent resistance not only in terms of principles – being against violence – but also strategy by compromising or limiting core nonviolent resistance dynamics.

The personal is political: contestations of a narrow nonviolence

As discussed in Chapter Four, the category of so-called private violence is a highly contested one, initially by feminist theory and activism through an argument that “the personal is political” (Chen et al., 2016, xxvi-xxvii; Pillow et al., 2019, vii; Hardikar, 2011). What is especially contested is the sense that private violence means violence which is irrelevant to politics, political theory, or political activities, but also the sense that private violence is overall less important than other forms of violence (McAllister et al., 1982, 9-10). It is worth emphasising the argument made in Chapter Four that the labelling of private and public/political as categories of violence are not “ontological categories - that is what actually *can* be seen by the public, or what actually *is* political. Rather, they

are socially constructed categories of what *should* be seen and what *should* matter politically”, and it is these normative prescriptions and assumptions that are critiqued and worked against.

Although there is not much work which focuses on the intersection of feminism and nonviolence, the anthology *Reweaving the Web of Life: Feminism and Nonviolence* (McAllister et al., 1982) offers an example of this. It also provides an account of a feminist break with nonviolence theory and activism, precisely because of a refusal within the pacifist movement to incorporate anti-violence efforts in terms of personal or private forms of violence into the movement’s aims and work (*ibid*, 6-7). In their contribution to the anthology, Bickmore (*ibid*, 162-164) provides a summary of the feminist arguments in favour of integrating the two perspectives, as well as the reaction of the peace movement:

Patriarchy is violent both in its public manifestations - militarism, economic imperialism, capital punishment, and hierarchy-bureaucracy, and in its private manifestations - domestic violence, rape, job discrimination, and pornography. For some reason the mainstream peace movement has all but totally ignored ‘private,’ close to home violence in favor of combating more ‘public’ and remote wrongs (McAllister et al., 1982, 163).

In the same anthology, Meyerding (McAllister et al., 1982, 9-10) notes that the task of “[i]ntegrating nonviolence into feminism requires us to really believe that the personal is political and there is no dividing line between them, no hierarchy of which is more important”. These calls for taking action against forms of systemic violence within nonviolence and pacifist movements were, however, mostly dismissed or ignored (*ibid*, 6-7).

While these discussions and many of the concepts developed during them originate from second-wave feminism in the 1960s to 1980s, a significant later contribution is the concept of intersectionality, first coined by Kimberlè Crenshaw (Chen et al., 2016, xxvii; Collins, 2017; Parker and Hefner, 2015). Crenshaw (1991, 1244) used “the concept of intersectionality to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s ... experiences” and which cannot simply be viewed as separate forms of oppression or identity. The term is intended to go beyond these two particular identities in its analysis, to demonstrate how “the multiple and complex identities we each hold in relation to privilege and oppression” affect the occurrence and meaning of private violence (Chen et al., 2016, xxvi-xxvii).

Chen et al. (2016, xxvi-xxvii) argue that another aspect which the second-wave feminist movement did not pay attention to when fighting private violence was “the disturbing paradox of prevalent intimate violence within activist communities, and the degree of collusion, refusal, and/or incapacity to address this urgent issue demonstrated even by anti-violence movement ‘experts’”, an urgent issue which had become “‘dirty little secrets’ within our progressive movements and communities” (an example of this omission is found in McAllister et al. (1982, 11)). This shortcoming led the authors of *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities* to begin working in 2003 on what would eventually become the published book, a rare resource on “partner abuse and sexual assault in activist communities” (Chen et al., 2016, xxvi).

However, these questions of everyday politics and private violence, especially as occurring also *within* nonviolent movements, are scarcely discussed within nonviolence literature. This may in part be due to a purist assumption that these issues do not occur within the nonviolent resistance sphere, or at least not in a way and to a degree that makes it important to the understanding of nonviolent resistance. An example of this can be seen in claims for example that “the gendered nature of violence wielded by men” is something found in violent histories of war, not in the “quiet, nonviolent” history of civil resistance (Bartkowski ed., 2013, 2). In contrast, this chapter argues that violences such as gendered and racist violence are found both within nonviolent resistance movements and outside it and are thus not a phenomenon belonging solely to violent resistance, or societies outside of nonviolent resistance spaces.

Brian Martin (2015, 162) argues that the negligence of such questions is because this “mostly occurs out of the public eye”, whereas “[c]ivil resistance theory and practice have mainly focused on activities in the public sphere ... and have given little attention to struggles inside organizations”. In this sense, the example of the Occupy camps is especially interesting because the discussion did become very public and had an impact on public perception of the movement, thus forcing the issue into conversations of social movement spaces. In the following sections, this chapter will also argue that although the occurrences of violence discussed here do, in a sense, take place out of the public view, they are inextricably linked with the public and highly visible nonviolent protests carried out by the movement. The separation between public and private is then, once again, challenged.

A more recent example of how nonviolence theory views these questions of violence as at best marginal, and at worst even counterproductive to nonviolent resistance is seen in Nepstad's (2015) discussion of regime strategies to weaken civil resistance movements. In the discussion, issues such as race, class, religion, etc. are treated as imagined, or at least irrelevant divisions, which organisers should avoid regimes taking advantage of to divide the movement (Nepstad, 2015, 136-137). With phrasings such as the risk of diverting "attention from the *real* political issues", "*claims* of movement prejudice", and "*accusations* of being led by elites" (*ibid*, 137, my emphasis), the implication is that these issues do not occur within nonviolent movements, or are at the very least not very important except as potential weak points for an opponent to take advantage of. This form of hierarchy of violences or issues is a reoccurring theme for this thesis and especially this chapter.

In his book on the workings of nonviolence, Vinthagen (2015, 49, 145) discusses the influence of feminist nonviolence from the 1970s of working against the specific forms of private violence that are silencing and marginalisation through internal power structures in meetings. Vinthagen (*ibid*, 145) writes of the feminist inspired focus on "the problematic roles and oppression that arise in meetings", and the response of suggesting concrete behaviours and structures to counter this in nonviolence handbooks. Although feminist critiques have then influenced nonviolence theory in this particular way, the chapter will discuss whether these influences and techniques have been at times co-opted to justify an assumption of complete equality within nonviolent movements, an illusion which may work to mask and reinforce inequality and marginalisation.

While there is, as shown, a history of the discussion of private violence within social movements (including nonviolent ones), the push for focus on this has been resisted and contested and has led to breaks between theories and movements rather than integration. This is arguably visible in recent nonviolence literature, which deals with the question only rarely, and often more with an implication that such discussions are distractions or potential weaknesses rather than part of the core of what nonviolent resistance is and does.

Not everyone's streets: violence in protest spaces

While the Occupy movement was widely regarded as an inspiring and important social justice movement, the occurrence of sexual assaults, harassment, and gendered violence within Occupy camps had a profound impact on public perception and, more importantly for this discussion, on

conversations of safety and privilege in social movement and activism spaces (North, 2011a; Penny, 2015, 87). Associate Professor in Race and Gender Studies, and co-founder of online publication *The Feminist Wire*, Lomax (2011) wrote, as the Occupy camps were at their height, that the “Occupy movement has a growing challenge that needs immediate attention: in-house rape”, referring to at least four reported rapes in occupations, and arguing that there were probably “several others, most of which have likely gone unreported - for various reasons”. An anonymous Occupy protester reported to the feminist news site Jezebel that while they were very supportive of the movement and its goals, “the physical space is not very safe - especially for women” (quoted in North, 2011b). This reality resulted in disappointment and disillusionment amongst activists, as a space which was supposed to be uniquely open to everyone to participate and speak in, with “unifying” potential, became unsafe for some of the same groups that were already used to being unsafe in public spaces (Doyle, 2011; Penny, 2015, 86). Journalist and author Laurie Penny (2015, 86-87) describes how “even ... in these brief magical spaces opening up across the world to let in freeloaders and free-thinkers and revolutionaries and lost kids to hold the space for as long as they could stand, even there, there was rape” and sexual assaults in tents and at sit-ins.

This disappointment is especially understandable given the importance of these encampments to the identity, symbolism, legitimacy, and organisation of the Occupy movement and its branches. The centrality of occupations and protest camps in nonviolent theory and practice also demonstrates why the instances of violence and their aftermath are (or should be) important to discussions of nonviolent resistance. Although protest camps - or occupations - were of course not new phenomena at the time, they became an important global phenomenon in 2011, with protest camps in Tahrir Square in Egypt, Syntagma Square in Athens, Zuccotti Park in New York City, Puerto del Sol in Madrid and the London Stock Exchange (Calhoun, 2013, 27-28; Feigenbaum et al., 2013, 1). Gitlin describes that especially to activists themselves, what Occupy “‘stood for’ was the virtue of encampment itself, assembly as a way of life, a form of being”, an idea which springs from influential American and Enlightenment theories of political life as based on public assembly (Calhoun, 2013, 35; Gitlin, 2013, 9, 19). The Occupy movement is therefore a particularly strong, but far from the only, example of the importance that protest camps or occupations can hold for a movement. It illustrates a number of ways in which the everyday dynamics of protest camps and other movement spaces are important to the core functioning of nonviolent movements, and

therefore, why the occurrence of different forms of violence here is crucial to the theory of nonviolent resistance.

First, protest camps are often the organisational centres of a movement (Feigenbaum et al., 2013, 2). This was certainly the case for the Occupy movement, where the occupations were innovation hubs and perhaps the most important space for meeting other activists and forging new connections (Calhoun, 2013, 29-31; Gitlin, 2013, 9). The ability to be present at, and ideally live in, the protest camps was therefore the key to being able to participate in the organisational work of Occupy. Second, this organisational centre is often linked to a strong symbolic role played by protest camps, because organisation and decision-making procedures within occupations are a chance to exemplify different ways of organising society and imagining “alternative worlds” (Feigenbaum et al., 2013, 1-2). As Rossdale and Stierl (2016, 157) comment, “[t]o ‘occupy’ has become emblematic of a politics that is inclusive, subversive and active in a manner that both challenges and goes beyond traditional conceptions of politics as (mere) representation”, that is, the occupation or protest camp in itself is seen as a demonstration of living and embodying radical political and social ideals. Gitlin (2013, 13-14) describes the strength of this narrative in the Occupy camps, which were made up of “people who wanted community, a new start, a society in secession or a society somehow of their own”. This included a number of procedures for open discussions and horizontal decision-making within the camps (Boler et al., 2014, 442). This means that unequal access to physical participation in the occupation means not only unequal access to participate in organisational work, but also to shape and influence the vision of society articulated by the movement. As discussed in Chapter Two, greater and more diverse participation is argued to be an important difference between violent and nonviolent resistance and a major advantage for nonviolent resistance. This participation is possible because the different barriers to participation are lower - but not non-existent - in nonviolent resistance (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 30, 34). Violence between members in social movement spaces reduces and complicates this access to participation significantly and should therefore be central to arguments around nonviolent resistance, even if these are made from a purely strategic standpoint.

Third, an occupation or protest camp is often, along with large-scale marches and protests, a symbol or representation of the movement’s democratic appeal and broad support, a way of “representing the people by public gathering” (Calhoun, 2013, 31; Feigenbaum et al., 2013, 2). This

means that for participants, these actions give them “the sense of being part of something bigger than oneself, of acting not just as a small minority of the population but as ‘the people’” (Calhoun, 2013, 31). In other words, the physical gathering with the aim of protesting a common cause is a strongly unifying experience, but one which comes with a risk of forgetting that even large and diverse crowds may not have the universality to speak for or represent the people as such (*ibid*). Again, this becomes especially true when access to participation in the movement is unequal. In the case of the Occupy movement, the public spaces created within the occupations were, both intentionally and unintentionally, a very diverse, open, and leaderless space (Gitlin, 2013, 13-14). While this diverse membership was an important part of the identity of the movement, commentators such as Sociology Professor David Meyer argued in the context of the sexual assaults that occurred in Occupy camps that this “history of welcoming everyone and just assuming that they’re on your side” could be problematic if not followed with a “set of social sanctions or norms” to regulate and maintain the space for as many participants as possible to feel safe (quoted in Newcomb, 2011).

For these reasons, protest camps are a compelling example of how and why everyday life in between protests and actions, including instances of “private” violence, is extremely important to consider in order to fully understand the movement and its work. While the importance of these everyday politics is accentuated during occupations because of “the sustained physical and emotional labour that goes into building and maintaining the site as simultaneously a base for political action and a space for daily life” (Feigenbaum et al., 2013, 2), it is important to emphasise that this significance is still not exclusive to occupations and protest camps; everyday life and relations are always part of a resistance movement, as members have “private” interactions and relationships in between and around meetings, as movements will meet physically in some spaces at some point, whether that is to organise or protest, and as many social movements are based on networks of private connections (Chen et al., 2016, xxxii).

In their discussion of the sexual violence in Occupy camps, Lomax (2011) suggests that one of the possible reasons why they assume that more sexual assaults than the reported number had taken place is that “there is inside pressure not to report rape outside of the camps for fear of bad publicity”. This sense that the reporting of violent crimes was discouraged or contested within Occupy was at the forefront of the debate when Occupy Baltimore, a relatively small Occupy camp,

attracted national attention for a sexual offense policy which discouraged victims of sexual assault from reporting the assault to the police in order to avoid “the involvement of the police in [the] community” (Gaeng, 2011; North, 2011b). Jenny Gaeng was an activist at Occupy Baltimore and wrote about the policy and issues of sexism in the movement (Gaeng, 2011). They later become the media contact for Occupy Baltimore’s revised security policy following the reactions and debates in the media (North, 2011b). Although Gaeng (2011) does point to problems with gendered violence and hierarchies in the movement, they write that the policy in question was never officially passed by Occupy Baltimore, was quickly replaced, and had simply been picked up by a “right-wing blogger” in order to create outrage and a sense that the Occupy camps were highly chaotic and unsafe spaces. Despite this, and an official response from the Occupy Baltimore General Assembly stating their commitment to supporting sexual assault survivors in taking the action they want - whether that is involving police or not - the story was widely read and discussed (North, 2011b). Similar stories of the dilemma over the handling of sexual assaults within Occupy camps, given both the issues with the legal systems for sexual assault survivors in general, but in particular the strained relationship with the police within the movement, were coming out from other camps (Newcomb, 2011).

Rather than an overriding concern with publicity, with an implication that problems are accepted by the movement as long as they are not discovered by the media and public, however, this sense of pressure to not report or publicise violence is perhaps better understood as springing from the importance that the Occupy occupations were given, as examples of a better way to be a community. That is, because the (successful) running of Occupy was seen to demonstrate and validate the ethos and promise of the Occupy movement, pointing out instances which complicate the success and purity of these spaces is likely to be met with strong reactions because it may be seen as an attack on the spirit and integrity of the movement itself. In their wider analysis of the gender politics of the Occupy movement, North (2011b) suggests as much by arguing that if victims of gendered violence or sexual assault speak out, they risk being “demonized if they speak up in ways perceived to discredit the group”, and that this had happened in high-profile cases of sexual assault such as a widely reported assault in the Occupy Cleveland camp (see also Occupy Wall Street sexual assault survivor's team (2011) for further context on media narratives around this). “In both cases”, North (*ibid*) continues, “the assumption has been that any allegation of inappropriate behavior forever tarnishes a radical movement, and thus should be avoided at all costs”. A strong

need and push for a movement identity of being better, less violent, more progressive than “society” - or perhaps even being completely free of these issues - can therefore end up marginalising and erasing the lived experiences of activists in the protest camps who are exposed to everyday, private violences there as well, and thereby lessen the opportunities of challenging and minimising these forms of violence.

The events at Occupy Baltimore especially highlight another process as well, which is a conflict over which values or fights against which forms of violence should be at the forefront of movement decisions. That is, it is an example of how a particular grouping within Occupy Baltimore who were strongly anti-police attempted - consciously or subconsciously - to make this particular stance important to the collective identity of the movement through making it a central part of how security in the camp was handled, at the expense of approaches and responses advocated by survivors’ groups (Gaeng, 2011; Samuel, 2013, 402). Another protester in Occupy Baltimore reported an episode which speaks to this conflict, although not related specifically to sexual violence or harassment (North, 2011b). The occupier recalls a protest in which they had tried to stop physical fighting between other occupiers and police, and “the angry crowd (mostly young white men) turned on me. It was not sexual in nature but was out of the ‘calling the police is a violent act’ sentiment” (quoted in North, 2011b). This highlights the extent to which these disagreements and tensions are, at times, about what is defined as violence, and what is defined as the most important violence either universally or in the given context.

In response to these discussions, Occupy Wall Street published a statement written by members of their “sexual assault survivor’s teams” to provide information about a particular sexual assault in the New York camp which had been discussed publicly (Occupy Wall Street sexual assault survivor's team, 2011). In the statement, Occupy Wall Street reiterated their commitment to the right “to participate in peaceful protests without fear of violence” and aimed to “respond to media accounts that blame the survivor, and that attempt to use this horrific incident to attack OWS” (*ibid*). The statement further clarified that Occupy Wall Street were seeking to support survivors of sexual assault in choosing their course of action, whether that be reporting to the police or aiming at community justice approaches (*ibid*).

Although the many aspects of pursuing both legal redress and community justice as a sexual assault survivor is beyond the scope of the present discussion, it is worth noting as Andrea Smith (Cofounder of the initiative *INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence*) argues, that attempts at “restorative justice” have “often failed women, especially women of color, facing intimate or stranger/state violence” (Chen et al., 2016, xxiv). They write that:

For the community to hold somebody accountable they have to actually think what happened was wrong. So therefore you can’t rely on a romanticized notion of community or even assume that community actually exists. For a community-based response to be effective requires a political organizing component to it that actually creates communities that offer accountability” (Chen et al., 2016, xxiv).

This means that even with the Occupy movement working towards community-based solutions, this was no guarantee that protest camps would become safer spaces for women and gender minorities. Because of this, opening up debates and discussions about how violence is perceived and defined within movements becomes especially important, as opposed to, as Smith says, relying on a narrative that declaring a space a “community” will solve tensions, hierarchies, and inequalities. Further, this highlights the importance of emphasising the systemic nature of the violence discussed here, since systemic violence is still at times misunderstood to be isolated incidents as discussed in Chapter Four. In this view, the problem of sexual and gendered violence would be solved if a perpetrator – or all perpetrators – are simply removed from the space, and the assumption is that these can indeed be easily identified as the “bad” people of the group.

The systemic nature of this violence is important to the discussion at hand in more, and sometimes contradictory, ways as well. It underlines the fact that this system of violence is not unique to the Occupy camps - or a number of other protest camps - but rather a continuation of systems of violence within wider society. As Gaeng (2011) writes, this purist ideal of a social movement space as free of surrounding systems and structures of violence sets unrealistic expectations for movements. They write:

this whole mess is not about us. As much as most of us wish it wasn’t so, Occupy Baltimore is a microcosm of the social strata that comprise our messed-up society. If someone here

touched me inappropriately or doesn't care about the lack of female voices at the [General Assembly], it's not because he's a poster boy for What's Wrong With the Revolution. He's the depressing norm (Gaeng, 2011).

Although this "depressing norm" can of course be worked against, thereby creating hopefully less violence and repression in movement spaces than outside them, structures of repression and violence are not automatically reset or made to disappear simply through setting up an autonomous zone with "new" social structures in a protest camp. This means that it does not, perhaps, say anything particularly bad about the Occupy movement that these events happened, despite the attacks being used to discredit the camps and sometimes protest spaces in general as highly unsafe spaces (Knickerbocker, 2011). It does, however, mean that Smith's (Chen et al., 2016, xxiv) reminder that well-meaning communities does not automatically mean universally safe ones, is especially relevant, since Occupiers are also brought up and shaped by a society outside of Occupy in which these forms of systemic violence are widespread, disregarded, or made to disappear from the public's notice.

On the other hand, it is important to point out the systemic nature of the violence because this makes the violence more noteworthy and impactful; it makes it "mean more". What the systemic nature means is that the sexual assaults in the occupations, rather than being isolated instances of "bad apples" within a movement, are part of a larger problem which affects not only large parts of society, but also access to participation in the movement and ability to identify with the movement ethos and goals. As Gaeng (2011) writes, the assumption that these instances of violence were isolated incidents of personal or private violence, also assumes that "it's somehow possible to affect change as a divided and internally oppressive community". These forms of violence are then easily seen as not affecting the core of what it means to be a nonviolent social movement, or practice nonviolent resistance, because it is nothing unique about this particular space. The above section has aimed to demonstrate, however, why it does in fact in a number of ways address and compromise claims of nonviolence.

Are we all equal here?

A central and often emphasised feature of both Occupy and Extinction Rebellion is the idea of being non-hierarchical, leaderless, and decentralised movements; an idea based on an assumption of

equality within the movement and perhaps on an assumption that declaring a space “emancipated” makes it so (Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 163). In Occupy, the pull away from hierarchies and structures came from core organisers, since “[m]any if not most of the prime movers in Occupy - the inner movement - were anarchists and democratic radicals, desirous of reorganizing social decisions around directly democratic, ‘horizontal’ assemblies” (Gitlin, 2013, 6). Similarly, Sam Knights (Farrell et al., 2019, 11), a founding member of XR, defines Extinction Rebellion as “a decentralized mass movement of concerned citizens. It is open to anyone who takes action in a non-violent way”. Unlike Occupy, however, which started with no formal structure and no formalised demands (Gitlin, 2013, 18), the structure of Extinction Rebellion was to an extent well-defined, and the movement had three key demands defined by the founding members (Extinction Rebellion UK, 2020; Farrell et al., 2019, 11).

This assumption of equality is related to questions of violence within movements in several ways. Firstly, it is directly related to levels of safety in movement spaces as discussed earlier in this chapter, since an assumption of equal levels of safety and risk prevents actions and procedures which might mitigate the different levels that actually exist. This could include actions such as recognising a need for a strong support network and preventative work when it comes to sexual violence within movements. A reported sexual assault in the Occupy Cleveland camp provides an example of the above point on the need for support structures which recognise differences and inequalities rather than assuming substantial equality. During the Occupy protests, media sources reported an instance of sexual assault in the Occupy Cleveland camp, in which a 19-year old woman said that she was raped by a man named Leland, who she said she had “been assigned to share a tent with” (Doyle, 2011). However, the organisers of the occupation “denied any potential responsibility, pointing to the ‘leaderless’ nature of the movement” (*ibid*). The claim was, then, that no protester would be told they had to share a tent with anyone else, and that therefore, it is not the responsibility of organisers if a sexual assault occurs in a shared tent. However, as Doyle argues:

Whether a girl that young - a girl who attends a school for students with ADD and autism, and may not process social interactions in a neurotypical way - would assume ‘leaderlessness’ to work like this, or whether she might not naturally interpret an organizer’s

saying ‘why don’t you share a tent with Leland’ as an ‘assignment’ given how power works elsewhere, is not addressed (Doyle, 2011).

Thus, the actual functioning of anarchy and leaderlessness is not neutral or experienced the same by everyone (Doyle, 2011). If these systems of governance are premised on an idea of equality between participants which does not exist, then the leaderlessness of a movement will risk recreating and reinforcing the systems of oppression, systematic violences, and power structures of the surrounding society. In the case of Occupy, Doyle (*ibid*) writes that “the boundaries of anarchy and leaderlessness, as they concern sexual assault, continue to trouble many women who are involved - or would like to be involved - with Occupy”.

An awareness of inequality might also mean recognising the need to publicly acknowledge the different relationship that communities of colour will have with law enforcement when planning civil disobedience actions, and to actively take this increased risk of violence into account. This concern is an extension of the discussion of Extinction Rebellion’s strategy from Chapter Five, which brought up concerns that the movement was insufficiently prepared for the mass arrests it aimed to provoke. A consequence of not assuming equality between members would also be to recognise the increased need for support for more vulnerable activists, at the level of risk they choose to take. Although Extinction Rebellion made the concept of “People Care” a tenet of the movement’s regenerative culture framework, the actual practice of this had according to Westwell and Bunting (2020, 548) a tendency to individualise issues at the expense of a structural and systemic framework. The idea of “People Care” is to focus on relationships and “emotional and physical support” for activists (*ibid*). Despite this intention, the researchers report that during their fieldwork in XR Manchester, they “witnessed incidents where marginalised groups’ experiences of inequality and oppression were not fully recognised or addressed” (*ibid*, 549). This criticism of exclusionary tendencies is backed up in Gil’s (2019) interviews with British activists of colour, who also saw different facets of exclusion of people of colour in the movement. A focus on “self-care” was found to be an important part of Extinction Rebellion’s internal work in Westwell and Bunting’s (2019, 549) fieldwork, a concept which “focuses on emotional and physical wellbeing”, but also one which is, again, an example of the individualising attitude of the group. The researchers found “that

systemic issues such as racism were often individualised, rather than openly discussed collectively within the culture of Manchester XR" (*ibid*).

Focusing on the role of violence within nonviolent movements requires, amongst other things, "rejecting liberal humanism, which equates moral equality to an equal distribution of the skills, dispositions and capacities required to participate effectively in political settings and negotiations" (Samuel, 2013, 402). That is, the idea that having stated that all members are equal in a movement space – or stating that that is the ideal of the movement – is not the same as that actually being the case. This inequality can be due to a number of different factors, as explored above, and will be reinforced through different mechanisms if it is unacknowledged.

Such a focus also requires rejecting the idea that social movement spaces are somehow independent or outside of the hierarchies and power dynamics of the rest of society and "unproblematically open, inclusive and non-hierarchical" (Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 158), in order to not simply obscure and reinforce these often violent dynamics further. A famous perspective on, and critique of, movements with a lack of leadership and structure is Jo Freeman's talk-turned-essay from 1970 *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*. Although the essay itself is focused on structurelessness within the women's liberation movement of the time (Freeman, 2013, 231), the arguments can be applied to other movement and group contexts. Freeman (*ibid*) argues that although the experiment with structureless movements stem from a "natural" dislike of an overly structured society which took away control from women, this had "moved away from a healthy counter to those tendencies to becoming a goddess in its own right". The problem with this status is the risk that activists and organisers will assume that an absence of structure is the only non-oppressive way to organise (*ibid*, 231-232), and therefore, any attempt at structuring or regulating a movement - even in the name of making up for inequalities amongst members - will be rejected.

The Occupy movement was famous - and prided itself - for its refusal to appoint leaders, and state a political programme, even as this was asked for by media and other political actors (Calhoun, 2013, 30; Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 159). This was a conscious decision because "[h]aving a leader often ruins protests - makes them as simple as one perceived failure or weakness on that leader's part" (Doyle, 2011). The way this lack of structure and programme was handled by the movement was to use "radical consensus and endless discussion", a performance of "the people capable of

spontaneous order” (Calhoun, 2013, 30). This decision-making process became not only an important aspect simply because of the decisions made, but also because the occupation became an important part of the “visual identity to outsiders” (*ibid*). To be part of the core of the Occupy movement - or the core of its branches in different cities which were relatively separate (Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 165) - therefore meant having to be comfortable and able to live and share space in the protest camps, with everything that that entails, including safety issues, accessibility, mental strains and so on. This creates an issue in terms of equal access to decision-making as well as access to influence the internal and external collective identity of the movement, especially if the assumption is that all potential occupiers have equal access and ability to participate.

This is especially so in movements such as Occupy that would sometimes “[deny] having centres” (Calhoun, 2013, 29) because that means there is no established way to become part of the decision-making core of the movement without being able to be consistently physically present. As Freeman (2013, 237) points out, even outside of the specific demands that an occupation-based movement places on activists wishing to engage, becoming a part of the core of a movement - especially an informal or structureless one - takes time, and this is hard to overcome for activists with full-time jobs or time-consuming commitments (such as family or care relations). Again, it becomes important to not conflate “moral equality”, i.e., the fact that morally all members are recognised as equal, with “practical equality” (Samuel, 2013, 405).

Once activists are present in the different deliberation and decision-making forums, outside hierarchies may impact the internal workings of a movement in other ways as well. Again, Freeman’s (2013, 232) essay points to this, when they argue that in spite of what actors may want to believe when they aim for a non-oppressive, structureless group, groups will always have structure of some sort. The essay argues that the claim of structurelessness becomes “a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others”, because a claimed lack of structure will prevent formal structures - which are open to discussion and contestation - but not informal structures, which are more difficult to challenge (*ibid*). In Occupy, everyone was - in theory - given a voice, but Doyle (2011) for example writes that “[i]n practice, we knew, ‘everyone’ tended to sound like the people who were already in charge - white people, men, straight people”. This is not only because “those with privilege tend to bring pre-existing power to the table” in even the most well-intentioned movements (*ibid*), but also because of subtle and normalised social influences

which differ according to identity. Socialisation plays an important role here, and “legitimises oppression and makes it self-evident (‘natural’)” (Vinthagen, 2015, 255). Vinthagen (*ibid*) explains this with the example of gender dynamics and norms, writing that “[i]n a patriarchal society, men are socialised to perceive dominance over women as natural and legitimate. During their normal upbringing, men are also taught something that has an even greater impact: the practical ability to dominate” through subconscious behaviours, ways of speaking, assumptions, etc.

An example of a movement approach which recognises both historic and current inequalities and aims to account for these in its narrative and structure is the Black Lives Matter movement. As discussed in Chapter Five, the movement is often unfavourably compared to the 1960s civil rights movement. However, Black Lives Matter themselves emphasise attitudes and aspects in which they are different from the civil rights movement to their own favour, by attempting to address issues from previous Black liberation movements. They write:

Black liberation movements in [the US] have created room, space, and leadership mostly for Black heterosexual, cisgender men – leaving women, queer and transgender people, and others either out of the movement or in the background to move the work forward with little or no recognition. As a network, we have always recognized the need to center the leadership of women and queer and trans people. To maximize our movement muscle, and to be intentional about not replacing harmful practices that excluded so many in past movements for liberation, we made a commitment to placing those at the margins closer to the center (Black Lives Matter, 2020a).

To address this, the BLM network has implemented a “set of guiding principles” for their decentralised network structure of local chapters (Black Lives Matter, 2020a). These principles focus for example on “center[ing] those who have been marginalized within Black liberation movements”, such as Black “women, queer, and transgender people” and people with disabilities (Black Lives Matter, 2020b; Banks, 2018, 710). As Maraj et al. (2018, 5) state, this is not an attempt to enable these groups to join activism or organising for the first time, but is rather an acknowledgement that “radical Black women - ... particularly Black trans women – have a long history of organizing and resistance”.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated a number of ways in which violence – in some form – plays a role within nonviolent movements, that is, affects the internal dynamics and workings of resistance movements which have it as a central part of their identity to not use violence. The discussions in the chapter engage with a range of definitions, or kinds, of violence, focusing perhaps especially on systemic and symbolic violence, but also the contestation of the category of “private” violence. What is at stake here is then both discussions of definitions of violence, that is, are issues such as silencing and marginalisation a form of violence or at least inherently connected to violence? But also at stake is the question of what instances of violence matter, even if there is agreement that they were, indeed, violent. As demonstrated in the chapter, these questions have been brought up in nonviolence and pacifist spaces for decades, with some, but limited, success. The reluctance to deal with “private” forms of violence, or violence that only affects some groups – such as gendered or racist violence – led to breaks within the nonviolence movement, as critical groupings such as feminist collectives refused to accept the hierarchy of violence which told them to simply put “their issues” to one side for now.

The chapter showed the impact of instances of sexual and gendered violence in Occupy camps in 2011 as a demonstration of how these forms of so-called private violence are, as feminist theory has long stated, in fact very much political issues. As shown in the discussion, the different Occupy groups agreed that the sexual assaults and gendered violence which occurred in the camp were important in the sense that Occupiers wanted to prevent further violence and support survivors. However, there were disagreements about how to handle this, and whether working against, addressing, and preventing sexual violence came before other aims and ideologies of the movement, such as being anti-police and anti-establishment. Further, the extent to which these violent events compromised the functioning, legitimacy, access, and equality of the movement, was contested. The argument made in this chapter is that these forms of violence are indeed – or should be – integral to an understanding and practice of nonviolent resistance. This argument is both practical, in that unequal levels of access to safe participation in movements undermines one of the core elements of successful nonviolent resistance, which is large and diverse participation. It is also a conceptual and normative argument, however, going back to the title question for this thesis, “isn’t all violence bad, though?” and attempting to take this seriously.

After this, the chapter examined the way in which an assumption of equality, and a preference for structurelessness based on this assumption, may make certain forms of violence more likely, and reinforce existing systems of violence and hierarchies. Structurelessness enabled by imagined equality highlights two different forms of violence: firstly, the systemic violence of wider society which affects people's ability to participate in movement work and decisions unequally; and secondly, the symbolic violence caused by this inequality, because it maintains and reinforces systems of domination within nonviolent movements by granting influence and clout preferentially to already dominant and privileged actors. The overall argument of the chapter is then that everyday relations, and everyday forms of violence, are important to incorporate into theories of what it is to be a nonviolent movement, and that these forms of violence cannot, by the people exposed to them, simply be pushed aside or forgotten about while working for a movement aim. They are always present in people's lives, and are therefore always present in some way in the movements that these people create and shape with their presence and participation.

Chapter Seven: Violence and Collective Identity Formation

The annual Auckland Pride parade in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, was confronted with the refrain, and attitude, of “Pride is a Protest” in 2015, when the activist group No Pride in Prisons (which later became People Against Prisons Aotearoa (PAPA)) broke through a barricade to protest the participation of uniformed police in the parade (Murphy, 2018). This was the first year that Auckland Pride had uniformed police officer marching as part of the parade (Radio New Zealand, 2015). The three protesters at the 2015 event were quickly removed by police with one protester being injured in the process (Radio New Zealand, 2015; Murphy, 2018; Field, 2015). The following year, No Pride in Prisons planned another protest, this time with more participants; the group was held back from joining or blocking the Pride parade, however, by police, some of whom reportedly used violence against the No Pride in Prisons protesters (RNZ, 2016b). The tension between PAPA and some members of Auckland Pride, who were intensely critical of the resistance to uniformed police participation, illustrates very well the wider tensions within rainbow communities in a number of countries over not just the participation of state authorities in Pride, but whether Pride parades are a protest and resistance movement, or a joyous celebration of diversity, inclusion, and freedom of expression (Johnston and Waitt, 2020, 3; Peterson et al., 2018, 1146-1147).

Pride parades are important in the rainbow community, being “the most visible manifestation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movements and politics”, and “foundational rituals for LGBT movements across the globe” (Peterson et al., 2018, 1146-1147). Peterson et al. (*ibid*) argue that as such, they “act as collective responses to oppression, encourage redefinition of self, and express collective identity”. It is especially this aspect of collective identity, and struggles over these in movements, that is the focus of this chapter. The discussion will use the examples of Auckland Pride (representing the wider discussion over uniformed police in Pride parades), Occupy, Black Lives Matter, and Extinction Rebellion and will focus on disagreements about what ideas such as inclusion, respecting everyone, and universal messages of care and progress entail, and argue that conceptions of these ideas which see them as having unlimited potential are mistaken and often simply overlooking already existing forms of marginalisation and violence. In contrast, rhetorics of resistance, such as PAPA at Auckland Pride, Black Lives Matter,

and the critics of Extinction Rebellion, openly resist or exclude certain groups or aims, in order to actually include others.

For this chapter, the process of collective identity formation is viewed particularly through a lens of examining the role of symbolic violence in collective identities of social movements, and the process of forming collective movement identities. This framework, described by Samuel (2013, 397) is a rare example of applying the concept of symbolic violence to a social movement setting. In the paper, Samuel (*ibid*) focuses on the “normative issues with process of collective identity formation” in social movements. These normative issues arise because movements such as Occupy and Extinction Rebellion do not have a static, objective, and innate collective identity based purely on a set of “social or political interests” (*ibid*, 405). Instead, collective identity is formed, defined, and maintained through a series of internal and external processes of negotiating or struggling over conflicting ideas of the aims, possibilities, and strategies of the movement (*ibid*). Importantly, this process is not necessarily - as is often assumed – one of open, equal, and rational discussion, but is often dominated by certain actors and hierarchies who more or less explicitly determine the collective identity of the movement (*ibid*, 403, 407). This means that the collective identity of a movement is formed both between the members of the movement - in internal processes - and towards and in interaction with an audience consisting of actors such as the general public, the media, movement opponents, and so on, whose perceptions and reaction will influence the formation process (*ibid*, 398, 401). In other words, the felt and expressed collective identity of movements such as Occupy and Extinction Rebellion will be both the product of internal (more or less visible and articulated) struggles for influence, as well as a response to what ‘works’ best in the movement’s surroundings. These two processes - internal and external identity formation – means that collective identity formation raises normative issues and leads to questions of justice (*ibid*, 398). Importantly, they also make collective identity formation a process in which symbolic power and symbolic violence are involved, since the effects can be the maintenance of relationships of domination and subordination (Aune, 2011, 432; Samuel, 2013, 401; Topper, 2001, 36). The framework of collective identity formation is relevant to this chapter in a number of ways, both as a site in which symbolic violence operates, but also as an example of processes in which symbolic violence interacts with other forms of violence.

The chapter will start with revisiting the critiques of Extinction Rebellion's approach to law enforcement discussed in Chapter Five. The focus in this chapter is, however, less on the direct effects of police violence against marginalised communities, but rather on the effect of Extinction Rebellion's rhetoric around the law and law enforcement. Further, XR's principle of respecting everyone, including police officers, will be discussed with use of the controversy over police involvement in Pride to illustrate the problems and tensions with this approach. Following this, the chapter will discuss collective identities which emphasise principles of universalism and apolitical narratives, that is, that what the movement or campaign is "about" and fighting for, is benefitting everyone in society rather than a marginalised grievance group, and that the principles of the movement's collective identity are practically universally shared principles. A clear example of this is Occupy's famous refrain of "We are the 99%", which was also used by Extinction Rebellion later. An issue with such framings, however, is that they may work to obscure the challenge of inequalities that is inherent to resistance movements and rhetoric, and based on actually stating and admitting that a movement's goal is primarily aimed at progress for a particular group, because they are marginalised at present. The discussion of the refrain of Black Lives Matter, and whether this in reality just means "All Lives Matter", illustrates this. Through these discussions, this chapter refers back to the concept of hurrah-words, which were introduced in Chapter One, since a number of the concepts nuanced here such as inclusion, diversity, and openness, are examples of hurrah-words as well. The tensions around the concepts, and the resistance to their assumed meanings, are at the centre of a number of the discussions in this chapter.

ACAB or "space for everyone"? The issue of police violence

Collective identity and questions of justice are applicable to the debates around Extinction Rebellion's rhetoric on law enforcement. As discussed in Chapter Five, the movement was criticised in its early stages for developing a tactic and conception of social change (e.g., Cowan, 2019; Gil, 2019; Smoke, 2019). In Chapter Five, the focus of the discussion was the violence committed by police and legal systems *against* nonviolent movements. In this chapter, which focuses on issues of violence in relation to a movement's expressed collective identity, the discussion around Extinction Rebellion's rhetoric on both prison, the legal system, and the police force in the United Kingdom is worth revisiting. In terms of forming a collective identity which would increase the perceived

legitimacy and seriousness of the movement, Extinction Rebellion combined two different paths to legitimacy: firstly, the democratic legitimacy of mass actions as a way of representing “the people” as discussed earlier in this Chapter Six; and secondly, the virtuous legitimacy of displaying extreme commitment and sincerity through the risk of civil disobedience, as discussed in Chapter Five. In other words, the movement attempted to become not only a movement of and for the people, but also a movement of resisters so committed to their cause that they would risk arrest and prison time for it. The mass civil disobedience actions of Extinction Rebellion were therefore important to the collective identity and legitimacy of the movement in a number of ways.

Extinction Rebellion’s stance and rhetoric of being respectful and civil towards police officers, to not critique or attack them for arresting activists, and to collaborate with police (Cowan, 2019; Westwell and Bunting, 2020, 549) is an important part of these discussions. As Westwell and Bunting (2020, 549) note, this was a deliberate choice, based on a classic nonviolent refrain that “all human life must be respected”. This is supposed to enhance the respectability and “worthiness” of a movement, but the researchers also note that this approach “could be alienating some groups who experience the police as an oppressive institution” (*ibid*). An illustration of this rhetoric is a tweet by Extinction Rebellion from the 16th of April 2019, stating that:

Most police are reasonable people. Some are idiots. No different to the rest of society. We hope that the police will soon join the rebellion, either passively or actively, in a move that would force the government to the negotiating table (quoted in Cowan, 2019).

As Extinction Rebellion’s legal team emphasises in the movement handbook, this hope for police defections is based on nonviolent resistance theory, notably that of Chenoweth who is referenced specifically (Farrell et al., 2019, 136). However, the statement made in XR’s tweet talks of “the police” joining XR rather than individuals defecting, thus making the target of their aspiration the institution rather than individual members. This is a significantly different argument to nonviolence literature, which discusses the defection of individuals working for or collaborating with the resistance movement’s opponent (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, 46-48). The movement’s legal team encourages protesters to “[a]pproach security forces with determination and compassion in mind: offer them flowers and speak of the joint efforts needed to protect life on this planet. Ask for their views on key issues” (Farrell et al., 2019, 136).

Apart from the significant differences between focusing on individual security officers defecting and the entire institution of the British police force joining the climate movement, another note-worthy difference is that Chenoweth and Stephan's (2011, 46-48) study talks of defections from security forces in authoritarian regimes, in which their job is to suppress key freedom rights such as the right to protest altogether. In contrast, it is entirely possible within a liberal democracy to do police work, such as managing or shutting down protests, preventing acts of civil disobedience, and arrest activists, and at the same time support extensive action against climate change through the conventional channels of political influence in liberal democracies. The dilemma created by policing nonviolent resistance is therefore significantly different and arguably less compelling than in the cases that form the basis of nonviolent resistance theory.

Further, and perhaps more importantly, what Extinction Rebellion's tweeted statement implies is not merely that the group takes a stance of respecting the individual people that happen to work for the police. Rather, the statement made in the tweet suggests that any harm arising from policing is because there are some "idiots" in the police force, just as there are in society, rather than because of any structural or systemic factors which lead to harm from policing happening much more frequently and seriously to some groups in society than others. That is, rather than acknowledging the institutional violence that is specific to the UK police force, but hoping that individual police officers may defect and join the rebellion, Extinction Rebellion attribute the harm and violence caused by police to individual bad officers, while hoping that "the police" as an institution will join XR's fight for climate change action. This is an example of the confusion or misuse of conceptions of unconnected incidents of interpersonal violence, rather than manifestations of systemic or structural violence which was discussed in Chapter Four. Although another tweet followed which added that "the police are institutionally racist", the two statements are inherently contradictory (Cowan, 2019) and illustrate the problem with acknowledging harm without changing behaviour and actions because of it.

In another example, Extinction Rebellion released a video in which they stated that the movement does not want to give more work to the "overworked and undervalued police force" (Gil, 2019). In Extinction Rebellion's published handbook from 2019, similar stories of friendly interactions with police also dominate the narrative, despite a single declaration from the group's legal team that "Extinction Rebellion is clear that the police continue to be structurally racist, unjust

and violent, particularly towards oppressed groups” (Farrell et al., 2019, 136). The overwhelming sense continues to be one therefore of stories of a “sweet rebellion” during which police officers were “congratulating” activists on their level of organisation, expressing support for the cause (while still policing the protest), offering food and drink to arrested protesters in cells “in acts of dear hospitality” and even declaring it “the nicest week of my working life” (Farrell et al., 2019, 97-98). As British anti-racism activist Youssra Elmagboul stated in an interview, this rhetoric taps “into the white, liberal belief that the police are here to serve and protect everyone” (in Gil, 2019). For these reasons, as Cowan (2019) sums up, “XR members’ ability to perceive the police and criminal justice system as benign structures who might even join their ‘rebellion’ smacks of race and class privilege”.

While Extinction Rebellion’s rhetoric is then partly based on an idea of respecting “all life” by respecting police officers despite the harm caused by the UK police force, it can also be interpreted as a different attempt at respectability politics. Through a narrative of mutual regard between police officers simply “doing their job” and protesters breaking the law, but nonetheless commending officers for the job they do, a respect for law and order, the fundamental rules of society, is communicated. This narrative is also an embodiment of the democratic sacrifice narrative, as described by Hooker (2016, 451-452) and discussed in Chapter Five. As Smith (2014) describes, respectability politics seek to achieve a certain goal by demonstrating commitment to and acceptance of the requirement that “compatibility with the ‘mainstream’ or non-marginalized class” is required in order to earn a desired goal for a movement. In other words, although Extinction Rebellion emphasised disruption, (organised) chaos, and rule-breaking as central to their mode of resistance, their early approach to the police and legal system is, I argue, more usefully understood as an attempt to practice democratic virtue and respectability politics by demonstrating the acceptance of the general rules of protest and social change in the UK. As has been demonstrated both here and in Chapter Five, however, these rules make it significantly more difficult for some people and groups to achieve and participate in social change than it is for others. In this sense, it is understandable why critics, particularly activists of colour, expressed a frustration that Extinction Rebellion’s tactics seemed “designed by and for middle-class, white Britain” (Akec, 2019; Gil, 2019).

The issues around resistance movements and their approach to police and legal systems that the example of Extinction Rebellion illustrates highlight another tension within resistance movements and their collective identity formation: the problems arising when concepts such as

“tolerance”, “respect”, “inclusion”, and “diversity” are described as central to the collective identity of a movement without a discussion of the more exact or substantial meaning of these concepts. These concepts, if used as unifying and vague descriptors of a movement’s identity or aims, are essentially examples of hurrah-words, as discussed in Chapter One. Chapter One defined these as words which are “at the top of the linguistic abstraction-ladder”, meaning that they have no clear substance (Jensen, 2003, 149, my translation). This means that communication using hurrah-words may seem uncomplicated or uncontroversial, because they can be used by different people meaning substantially different things by them, without these differences being noticeable (*ibid*); the assumption therefore becomes that the concept, such as “respect for all” denotes widespread agreement. The following discussion will use Extinction Rebellion and Auckland Pride to discuss a particular incarnation of this issue, which is the assumption that through calls for “inclusivity” and “tolerance”, a social movement can peacefully and unproblematically include everyone. That is, if all members or potential members simply “respect” or “tolerate” everyone else, then repression, marginalisation, and exclusion will not occur in the movement in question.

Although the question of whether police, and particularly police in uniform, should be allowed to march in Pride parades has been discussed in multiple Pride organisations and countries (Lopez, 2017; Stryker, 2018), the focus of the present discussion is on the case of Auckland Pride in Aotearoa New Zealand. As described in the introduction to this chapter, Auckland Pride was confronted with this tension the very first year that uniformed police marched in the Parade, when the activist group No Pride in Prisons, later PAPA, protested this (Field, 2015; Murphy, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2015). No Pride in Prisons was originally protesting the conditions for transgender prisoners in New Zealand especially, but also the conditions of marginalised prisoner populations more generally, and stated that the policies of the New Zealand Police and Department of Corrections (who also marched in uniform at Auckland Pride) “directly contributed to physical and sexual violence against trans and queer prisoners” (Radio New Zealand, 2016b). This led the Auckland Pride board to enter into a discussion with the Department of Corrections, who committed to improving conditions and support for transgender prisoners (Radio New Zealand, 2016a; Radio New Zealand, 2016b).

In 2017, Auckland Pride decided to not allow the Department of Corrections to participate as an institution in the upcoming march, because they had failed to deliver on the promises made

the previous year, although police officers were still allowed to march in uniforms (Furley, 2017; Murphy, 2018). Corrections staff were still able to attend the march, with Auckland Pride emphasising that the decision was about “the organisation, not the individuals”, but they would not be allowed to march in uniform, and were offered to march with other groups (Furley, 2017). While No Pride in Prisons welcomed the decision, calling it a “symbolic victory” after their protests and challenges during the previous two years, they emphasised that the “actual change” of improving conditions for queer and especially transgender prisoners was still missing (Furley, 2017). This statement illustrates that No Pride in Prison were already treating this as an issue of intersectional violence and activism, where the group’s goal was not limited to the actual Pride parade, but rather to use the particular space of Pride to protest and affect change on other, and intersecting, forms of violence. Meanwhile, the Department of Corrections said they were “disappointed with the decision”, and that they were in the process of developing and implementing better practices, but that it would take time due to the size of the organisation (Furley, 2017).

Uniformed police, and the NZ police force as an institution, participated in Auckland Pride again in February 2018. However, the question of police involvement in the Pride parade reappeared in New Zealand media already in July 2018, with an interview with a police force diversity service coordinator, Tracy Phillips, on the current focus of police outreach work towards rainbow communities (Chumko, 2018). While Phillips spoke of a focus on moving “from tolerance to inclusion”, measures emphasised in the interview were mainly examples of stating or claiming inclusion (such as police cars decorated with rainbows for various Pride marches and rainbow lanyards on police recruits) rather than practical steps towards changing policies and procedures in police work (*ibid*). Further, they stated in the interview that “while there was still ‘truckloads’ of work to be done, the relationship between police and the rainbow community had come ‘a long way’ from the days where gay men could ‘genuinely fear’ being arrested” (*ibid*), emphasising a common theme in narratives of tolerance and diversity, the theme of almost inevitable progress. What this view does not address, however, is the especially marginalised communities of trans people and people of colour in the rainbow communities, who were the ones mainly highlighted by critics of police participation in Pride, as well as the intersection of systemic police violence against people of colour - of all gender identities and sexual orientations - and the wider rainbow community. The different perspectives of proponents of police participation and PAPA respectively

illustrate the argument by Johnston and Waitt (2020, 4) that while “white bodies happily maintain structural advantage and are naturalised in place” in spaces such as Pride, “[t]he queer intersections of sexuality, post-coloniality, indigeneity, race and racism are evident in Aotearoa”.

Then, in November 2018 it was announced that the Auckland Pride Festival board had decided that police officers taking part in the 2019 parade must wear T-shirts instead of uniforms, and that following this decision, police decided to not take part at all (Corcoran, 2018). Phillips, representing again the police force, said to media in response to this:

It’s really, really sad ... We’re really proud of what we do for a job, who we are and the work that we’ve done - so if we’re not welcome, we’re certainly not going to force our way in, and we’ve taken that message as we are not welcome (quoted in Corcoran, 2018).

They further stated that although police would still be involved with Auckland Pride “on an operational basis”, they were now looking “to participate and support other events” (Awarua, 2018). Following the decision from the Pride Board to not allow uniforms, and the subsequent police force decision to not participate at all, media reported that Pride’s decision was controversial not only amongst commercial sponsors and other organisations, but also within the rainbow community (Boynton, 2018; Murphy, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2018; Roy, 2018). The decision meant that a board member stood down in disagreement, calls were made to boycott the 2019 Auckland Pride, a petition was started to overturn the ban, and a Special General Meeting of the organisation was called, with the intent of proposing a vote of no confidence in the Auckland Pride board (Boycott Auckland Pride, 2018; Boynton, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2018). After the decision and subsequent controversy, another hui (meeting) on the issue became chaotic and confrontational. Although the Auckland Pride board survived the vote of no confidence proposal, questions were raised whether the parade would be going ahead in 2019 following a substantial loss of corporate sponsors (Murphy, 2018). Members of the rainbow community set up a crowdfunding campaign in response, making a significant contribution to the 2019 Auckland Pride march (Murphy, 2018). In 2020, Aotearoa New Zealand news site *Stuff* reported that the February 2020 Auckland Pride, now titled “Our March” was hugely successful with more than 7000 participants from a range of countries and backgrounds, and an absence of uniformed police and corporate sponsors (Block, 2020). Another

Auckland Pride parade, organised by a different group in response to the 2018 controversy, would, however, include uniformed police (*ibid*).

Discussions of this controversy could feasibly choose to examine the arguments and rhetoric from the New Zealand Police, especially perhaps the implications of treating positions such as police officer or corrections officer as an “identity” rather than a job (as seen for example in Boynton, 2018; White, 2018), a stance which parallels the “Blue Lives Matter” rhetoric used against the Black Lives Matter movement (Solomon and Martin, 2019, 12). However, the discussion here will focus instead on the controversy within the New Zealand rainbow community, since this is the community in which collective identity formation was being formed and contested. The controversy was ultimately founded in disagreements over the meaning and possibility of ideals such as inclusion and diversity. This disagreement provides a useful example of the complexity that often lies behind ideals such as inclusion or respecting “everyone”, and the unacknowledged exclusions and marginalisations that can occur if these ideals are acted on without more thorough discussion.

Amongst the critics of the uniform ban, there was an idea that police officers were being “turned away” from the parade, although in fact, officers were never banned from marching, only from marching in uniform (Boynton, 2018; Murphy, 2018). Principles such as inclusion, diversity, and acceptance for “all” were often cited as a reason for being against the uniform ban (Boynton, 2018; Awarua, 2018; White, 2018). As Peterson et al. (2018, 1149) write, this idea of Pride parades as “‘open’ demonstrations encouraging everyone with a LGBT identity (or heterosexuals who sympathize with LGBT politics) to participate” is a popular narrative, although whether Pride marches are in fact as socially diverse as assumed is questionable. This chapter aims to argue that a possible reason why this narrative remains in place is precisely because many of the exclusions that do happen are indirect, such as the exclusion of communities of colour who do not feel safe marching with uniformed police. Furthermore, these exclusions may – as in the present case – follow systematic and structural exclusions and marginalisations in society, thus making them significantly less visible. The petition against the ban provides an idea of what is understood by these references to inclusion, when it calls on Auckland Pride to “Let the Police march in the parade. Let Corrections march in the Parade. Let people with different views in the community march in the parade” (Boycott Auckland Pride, 2018), a phrasing which suggests that questions such as these are about different opinions, not about actual harm and its causes. This idea is perhaps why another critic,

who called the decision to ban uniforms “fascist and elitist” also worried that “[a]s soon as we start not allowing some groups, where do we stop? You start with the police, then it can lead to lesbian groups who don’t like transgender. The list can go on” (quoted in Awarua, 2018). The assumption of these arguments, which lament the “exclusion of many very important faces in our community” (White, 2018) is that exclusion can be avoided; that is, that by including uniformed police, other members of the community are not excluded because of the effect of uniformed police officers marching in the parade. Further, evidenced by expressions such as different views, and groups excluding other groups they do not “like”, an implication is made that the questions here are not about actual systemic and structural violence through physical and non-physical harm, but merely about different opinions and world views, and some groups trying to limit openness and open discussion by excluding groups they do not agree with.

An excellent example of this idea that issues such as these are simply different views, and the ideal that Pride should be a space in which these should be able to co-exist and be debated is the opinion piece written by Andrew Whiteside, an LGBTQIA+ reporter and producer. While Whiteside (2018) ultimately remained against the uniform ban, the piece was an attempt to see both sides of the controversy, and acknowledged the merit of arguments against uniformed police as well. Interestingly, Whiteside brought this ideal of including opposing arguments up as a case against boycotting the parade, arguing that a boycott or attempt to have the event cancelled would be against the idea of Pride (*ibid*). This demonstrates another possible interpretation of the “shared” ideal of Pride as an inclusive space and movement. He wrote further:

There is a very simple outlet for everyone who is angry about this. Create a protest float, dress in uniforms if you want, march in solidarity with the police and use the damn parade to make the point you strongly believe in! That’s what pride parades are for. I remember the old Hero parades. They were at their best when they were filled with protesters (Whiteside, 2018).

What is overlooked in this vision is, however, the limitations that are consistently placed on certain views or arguments resisting power structures, which are not given an equal and open space for their point of view. A case in point is this very concrete call from Whiteside to simply participate in Auckland Pride with a clear protest, something which No Pride in Prisons was consistently barred

from doing as they were forcibly removed or kept away from the 2015 and 2016 events (Field, 2015; Murphy, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2015; Radio New Zealand, 2016b). In this way, arguments that rest on an ideal of open and equal dialogue and inclusion of opposing views are at risk of being one-sided, if they do not look to existing structures and procedures which make the space for dialogue limited and unequal. A parallel argument can be made for Extinction Rebellion's call for activists to ask for and include the views and perspectives of police officers (Farrell et al., 2019, 136) without acknowledging the privileged position that these views already hold compared to groups and communities that resist policing and are simply branded "anti-police", with no acknowledgement of their reasons for this resistance.

In response to the idea of including everyone, and everyone's preferences - even that of the police to march in uniform - PAPA and other Auckland Pride members expressed both in media and during community meetings on the matter that this inclusion is just not possible. As PAPA spokesperson Emilie Rākete (2019) wrote, during the meetings "takatāpui [Māori rainbow community members] and transgender members of the gay community made it clear that police violence was a pressing issue in their lives". Auckland Pride board chair, Chrissy Rock, added to this by explaining that during these community meetings:

It became really apparent that there are members of our community that didn't feel like they could be included in Pride while the police were marching in uniform because the uniform's a symbol of an institution that has a long way to go by their own admission (quoted in Radio New Zealand, 2018).

In other words, the Pride board had become aware that it was not possible to include everyone in Pride while having police officers march in their uniforms. The board was, however, still committed to the same principles of including everyone who wanted to participate in Pride, including police officers, and therefore supported the same ideals as critics of the uniform ban, although with a substantially different idea of what those ideals mean. This illustrates the importance of moving away from using concepts such as inclusion at high levels of abstraction as the basis for a movement's collective identity. This illustrates Johnston and Waitt's (2020, 3) point that Pride marches and other events are "'parties with politics.' The question ... is: whose politics and how political are they?". Rock stated for example, that this was about finding "a way forward"

in terms of police participating in the parade, while also “mak[ing] sure the most marginalised voices are heard” as is the tradition in rainbow communities (Radio New Zealand, 2018). The argument that rainbow communities are based on a tradition of listening to and respecting marginalised voices is backed by Whiteside (2018), despite his stated disagreement with the ban of uniforms. Rock and the Pride board described the uniform ban as essentially a compromise, an attempt to “welcome any and all rainbow people to be a part of the Auckland Pride Parade” by allowing both police officers and communities affected by disproportionate police violence to march in the Pride parade (Awarua, 2018; Roy, 2018). A similar compromising stance was seen in the Pride Board’s emphasis that the decision was about the institution of the New Zealand Police rather than individual officers and that police uniforms were a symbol of this institution (Corcoran, 2018; Murphy, 2018; Rāketē, 2019).

This discussion demonstrates that being visibly and directly against a group or institution and taking actions to limit their access or paths to participation is often not necessarily a simple question of reducing diversity and inclusion. Rather, it can mean, and often means, an attempt to include groups or individuals who are at present systematically excluded or marginalised. Complete inclusion with no restrictions is often not possible because of present systems of violence and repression, and narratives calling for this ideal of inclusion. Despite this, this is often what is behind expressed collective movement identities of inclusion, tolerance, diversity, etc. Treating articulations of resistance and distrust as merely divisive or exclusionary are, intentionally or unintentionally, merely working to keep certain forms of systemic and structural violence invisible. The calls for Extinction Rebellion to reconsider and change their rhetoric with regards to the police illustrate a similar issue. In the Extinction Rebellion Handbook, the legal team for the group writes:

Extinction Rebellion is clear that the police continue to be structurally racist, unjust and violent, particularly towards oppressed groups. We are totally opposed to such discriminatory practices. We are taking great care to design our strategy in a way that minimizes the chance that the police will shut down our actions before these actions have reached a critical mass. Our approach to the police, like that of other non-violent mass movements, is based on what will enable radical change. A key objective is to enable both younger and older people to participate in protests, something which becomes more likely

if the police do not overreact. Additionally, the more we can encourage the police to allow our protests to continue through ongoing communication, the more likely it is we can reach that critical mass (Farrell et al., 2019, 136).

This statement presents a perceived compromise, in which XR acknowledges the racism of the UK police, but are at the same time able to cooperate with police in order to allow members to protest more safely. However, the question is whether this compromise is, in fact, entirely realisable, or if – in a parallel to the Auckland Pride discussion – exclusion sometimes happens one way or the other, only more or less visibly. That is, if the “younger and older people” who Extinction Rebellion argue can participate more safely in protests because of the group’s cooperation with police (Farrell et al., 2019, 136) mean that communities of colour are less able to participate in the movement’s main tactic, then exclusion is still occurring. XR’s proposed compromise is one which despite acknowledging institutional racism and violence, maintains the primacy of being able to carry out their distinct tactic of mass civil disobedience in a way that benefits from democratic sacrifice narratives.

This functions to reinforce the dominance of a particular white, liberal, and respectability-seeking conception of nonviolent resistance in the collective identity of Extinction Rebellion, and through the movement’s high-profile status, to an extent in the wider climate movement. For activists, communities, and movements that are based on the intersection of racism and climate activism – intersectional environmentalism (e.g., Intersectional Environmentalist, 2020) – this rhetoric is highly exclusive, because as discussed in Chapter Six, intersecting forms of violence cannot simply be viewed or treated as separate for the time being or in certain spaces (Chen et al., 2016, xxvi-xxvii; Crenshaw, 1991, 1244). That is, climate activists of colour cannot simply put racial violence to one side while protesting climate change. This is in part because of the direct issues around protesting, policing, and prisons, as discussed above and in Chapter Five, but also because of wider intersections, notably the unequal distribution of the effects of climate change, which are and will continue to affect indigenous communities, the Global South, and communities of colour, while being disproportionately caused by actions in the privileged Global North (e.g. Cowan, 2019; Wretched of the Earth, 2019).

Peace and love for all? Universalism and apolitical narratives

A further aspect of collective identity formation as a site of struggle is attempts to frame a movement's overall aim as a universal one, fighting for the good of everyone rather than for equality or certain aims for a specific group of people. This theme points back to the discussion in Chapter Three of the examples and teachings of Gandhi, Mandela, and King which demonstrated that although these are often treated as universally valid and applicable, as well as a part of an inevitable progress of society, they are in fact more specific to their historical and political contexts. A rhetoric which presents goals and aspirations of a movement as universal can serve an important role in building community and support, by "establishing social identification" (Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 1993, 4). In order to achieve this universality, the values and principles promoted tend to be "little more than vague and idealized preferences", which, if made to be more specific, might be conflicting; however, "[w]hen considered in the abstract, a community treats its core values as altogether compatible with one another" such as the concepts of liberty and equality (*ibid*). In this way, a universalistic framing is another way to turn concepts into hurrah-words, and this is an important part of how such references can conjure up widespread (although not necessarily very committed or deep-felt) support. Further, the discussion in Chapter Three demonstrated that although ideas of universality were and are seen in the narrative that nonviolent movements fight for everyone or universal justice, it is often in fact a more limited group's interests that are the goal. In this context, universalism comes to mean one overriding injustice, and thereby one overriding solution, rather than aiming at a solution which acknowledges the diversity and intersections of different forms of oppression and violence. This tension between universalism and specificity will be explored further in the present discussion.

It is also worth emphasising, that although this section focuses primarily on consequences following from narratives and collective identities that aim to universalise, even *if* this universalisation would be more likely to lead to a successful outcome for the resistance movement, this is not necessarily the case. The concept of "polarization" as a strategy for social movements is well described, through for example King's civil rights work, and can lead to increased success - especially long-term - because it "forces people to take sides" (Case, 2018, 29).

The prioritisation of universal issues, or universal framings of issues, often leads to a creation of a strong hierarchy of problems, with issues that “affect everyone” at the top of the hierarchy over more limited or group-specific issues such as for example racist, sexist, or transphobic violence. The enforcement of hierarchies of violence is not new to either social movements more broadly, or nonviolent resistance. In *Reweaving the Web*, Meyerding writes:

Traditional nonviolence has suffered from a tendency to perceive the various forms and expressions of violence as having a hierarchical relationship with one another: this violence is more important than that violence. (Hence the tendency toward a series of single-issue mass ‘movements’ which, being single-issue, can aim only at reform rather than radical social change.) This ‘rating’ of issues has been with us for a long time (McAllister et al., 1982, 8).

This construction of arguments to favour a focus on one issue or struggle over others is also evident in the discussion of more recent nonviolence theory such as Nepstad’s discussion of attempts to divide resistance movements with “claims of movement prejudice” which may distract from “the real political issues” (Nepstad, 2015, 136-137) as discussed in Chapter Six. However, this chapter argues that this form of prioritisation or hierarchy of issues, is not always strictly necessary for success, or indeed conducive to this. As Laurie Penny argues:

men and boys are beginning to learn, slowly and painfully, that they cannot liberate themselves alone. Too many social movements have treated women, queer people and people of colour as collateral damage, telling us to swallow our suffering until the revolution is over - but somehow, that time never comes (Penny, 2015, 88).

Therefore, it becomes important to challenge universalist narratives which frame an issue, or violence, as the main issue of a certain time or society, which must be solved or overcome before any other forms of violence can be resisted – however compelling such narratives may seem, and however much they seem to hold a promise of increasing support because of their universality.

In the case of Occupy, the universalist aspirations are most clearly depicted in the famous and successful slogan of “we are the 99%”, which, as Calhoun (2013, 33) argues, was “brilliant framing”, because it “concentrated the most basic issues into a phrase”. The phrasing, which was vague in terms of specific complaints and solutions to address them, but still maintained an “overall

clear” sense that what the movement was “about” was narrowing “the gross imbalance of wealth” (Doyle, 2011; Gitlin, 2013, 18). The invocation of being the 99% managed, then, to be a unifying call because of its successful combination of a “populist ... invocation of ‘the people’ as the decisive locus of moral authority” (Calhoun, 2013, 35), a sense that the people in power were the cause because of arrogance and selfishness (Gitlin, 2013, 9; Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 167), and a claim to “a big, near-universal grievance” and “promises to address a near-universal problem” (Doyle, 2011). As Rossdale and Stierl write, however:

one can ask whether the image of ‘the 99%’ might also operate as a practice of conduction that both side-lines inequalities within the 99% and fails to recognise the complicated power relationships within this multitude. As such, we might wonder who among the 99% gets to speak and what privileges, hierarchies and subjectivities re-materialise when some (seek to) speak in the name of all but the 1%? (Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 175).

At stake in this question is then two aspects of the Occupy movement discussed in this thesis: the effects of an assumption of equality between members on the internal dynamics of a movement (we are all equal between ourselves because we are all “the 99%”), as discussed in Chapter Six, but also what that assumption means when it is communicated outwardly as a central part of a movement’s collective identity.

In addition, the 99% and other imagery and messaging used by Occupy provided an apolitical framing of these issues, which worked further to increase widespread support for the movement. As Calhoun (2013, 33) writes, critiques of inequality and the present financial system were not new by the time Occupy made them; however these had previously been framed as critiques of neoliberalism, and this more politically specific framing:

did not invite participants who did not share that particular analysis or its left-wing implications. To speak of the ‘99%’ vs. the ‘1%’, by contrast, was a populist message and as much more powerful in inviting ‘the people’ to have sympathy for the mobilization (Calhoun, 2013, 33).

This also highlights the way in which apolitical messaging can be used to further universalist narratives, by appealing to interests beyond “petty” political speculation or interests. The narrative

of speaking for the vast majority of a more or less defined conception of “the people”, rather than for a specific political analysis and vision was, then, crucial to the unifying and mobilising power of the Occupy movement. In fact, the Occupy movement is described as having “a near ‘phobia’ about formal organizations and political parties”, which led to a potential tension in that the movement was made up of informal representatives of a number of these without formalising this structure (Calhoun, 2013, 36). This avoidance of organisations and traditional political groupings was not only, or perhaps even mainly, to avoid influence from right-wing or moderate political parties, but also to avoid “leftist forces which would seek to conduct the movement in particular ways” (Rossdale and Stierl, 2016, 164). Through that, Occupy was also making it more difficult to potentially challenge the involvement of any given party or organization, since they were not “officially” involved or represented in Occupy. Similarly, Extinction Rebellion were careful to emphasise that despite the inclusion of essays by two British MPs, from the Green Party and Labour Party respectively, “Extinction Rebellion thinks beyond politics” and that these two authors were included only because “they represent important forward-thinking sentiments that we hope will resonate and develop rapidly within the UK political sphere”, and not because of a link between action on climate change and certain political leanings or parties (Farrell et al., 2019, 145, 161).

With a reluctance to admit the involvement of established political parties and groups, and their populist messaging, Occupy “tapped into a widespread sense of being the people, being the legitimate basis of society, and being ignored”, which allowed Occupy to join “the international mobilization of the indignant” (Calhoun, 2013, 34). Such a populist and universalist narrative and appeal was a new phenomenon in American social movements, where neither “[t]he industrial union surge of the 1930s”, “the civil rights movement”, or “the movement against the Vietnam War, nor the women’s nor gay movements” had from the beginning such “majority support” (Gitlin, 2013, 8). The “great” nonviolent movements of the past were, then - as shown in Chapter Three for some of these movements - crucially different from both Occupy and Extinction Rebellion in terms of the specificity of their aims, even if they have sometimes later been made into a popular narrative of universal progress and betterment for all of society.

The imagery of the 1% and the 99% is so popular that it has been repurposed by other movements, such as Extinction Rebellion (Farrell et al., 2019, 4). In general, Extinction Rebellion also

display a strongly universalist narrative around their aim and movement, demonstrated well by the first lines of their “Declaration of Rebellion” which reads:

This is our darkest hour. Humanity finds itself embroiled in an event unprecedented in its history, one which, unless immediately addressed, will catapult us further into the destruction of all we hold dear: this nation, its peoples, our ecosystems and the future of generations to come (Farrell et al., 2019, 1).

Extinction Rebellion further demonstrate their narrative of placing the aim of their struggle – substantial action against climate change - as apolitical, or “above” politics, writing that:

The ecological crises that are impacting upon this nation ... can no longer be ignored, denied or go unanswered by any beings of sound rational mind, ethical conscience, moral concern or spiritual belief (Farrell et al., 2019, 1).

As pointed out by Joyce (2020, 384-385, 387), this framing of climate change as an issue that goes beyond politics is an example of an “unabashed apocalypticism”, one of a number of traits shared by XR and versions of Christianity. This purist phrasing of one, relatively isolated, problem above all others creates a clear hierarchy, in which nothing is more important than preventing this impending and universal doom. As XR write in their handbook, “[i]n the face of the enormity of climate change, all other policy begins to feel like displacement activity” (Farrell et al., 2019, 45). Another concrete example of this use of apocalypticism to push other issues of violence and oppression to the side is provided by long-time peace activist Barbara Deming in an interview about a peace movement conference in the 1960s during which:

the question as to whether or not pacifists should take part in civil-rights actions began to be discussed. Many pacifists who were present said that we shouldn’t. Because there were so few of us and disarmament was such a pressing priority, they were afraid that we would dissipate our energies. I remember one man making the point: ‘If we all blow up, it’s not going to matter whether we blow up integrated or segregated.’ That fight was for later (quoted in McAllister et al, 1982, 8).

In this way, apocalypticism functions to exclude accounts which favour intersectional views, or other forms of violence as relevant to the core of a resistance movement and its aims. This framing of climate change as *the* overriding threat to humanity itself has led to some concerns that XR's approach "raises the spectre of the classically recognised dark political consequences of invoking security, with the mobilisation of crisis concepts militating against deliberative or inclusive politics" (Slaven and Heydon, 2020, 59). In other words, if a movement is centred around a narrative of an existential threat to humanity itself, it is difficult or impossible for marginalised or repressed voices to gain traction when trying to add seemingly "specific", or "minority" issues to the movement aim and identity. This has led to actors such as The Wretched of the Earth Collective³ calling for a decolonisation of Extinction Rebellion. These actors acknowledge the encouraging development of XR's highly successful mobilisation, while also calling for an intersectional analysis which would "explicitly [politicise] the exclusionary and colonialist power dynamics" that created the crisis now presented by movements such as Extinction Rebellion as an equalising and universal experience (Slaven and Heydon, 2020, 60), not too dissimilar from popular refrains that "climate change doesn't discriminate". As Naomi Klein argues, however:

There is always this discourse when disasters hit: 'Climate change doesn't discriminate, the pandemic doesn't discriminate. We are all in this together.' But that is not true. That is not how disasters act. They act as magnifiers and they act as intensifiers (in Viner, 2020).

One effect of this narrative is discussed by Simmone Ahiaku, a climate activist, who stated in an interview that she has felt unwelcome in university climate societies, and for example had tried to bring up the racial aspect of climate change hitting Pacific island nations in the Global South, but that other activists "did not entirely understand how it was specifically a 'race issue', so [they] thought it would be better to frame this as 'all people are suffering under climate change'" (quoted in Gil, 2019). Another interview in the same article on racism and climate change activism with Zamzam Ibrahim, a student politics officer in the UK, suggests that such seemingly universalist views

³ "Wretched of The Earth is a collective of over a dozen grassroots Indigenous, black, brown and diaspora groups, individuals and allies acting in solidarity with oppressed communities in the Global South and Indigenous North" [Wretched of the Earth, n.d.]

are in fact more about a sudden sense of urgency once the Global North and white people are impacted:

For decades, our families and communities in the global south have faced land exploitation and poisoning, toxic waste dumping and ecological disasters ... While entire communities were facing catastrophe in the '80s from climate catastrophes, [the wider environmental movement] chose to focus on penguins, polar bears and fluffy animals, thereby sending the clear message that they did not care about these communities (quoted in Gil, 2019).

What these narratives risk leading to is not only the silencing of relevant and crucial intersections of forms of violence - such as those between race and climate change, or the safety of women and non-men in any public space, including important protest spaces - but also the exclusion of important actors, who, if they try to challenge this claim to universality risk seeming to go against the "99%" or "the people", rather than just a specific group or movement. Given that these actors will often be – as in the examples used in this thesis – already marginalised groups and people, this silencing maintains a system of domination in which already privileged actors maintain their access to and central role in shaping social change; this dynamic is, in essence, a form of symbolic violence (Aune, 2011, 432; Topper, 2001, 36).

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, another aspect in which Extinction Rebellion, especially early on, took a universalistic approach was through expressing a respect for "all human life", which meant for example treating police officers with respect, as a central part of the movement's collective identity (Westwell and Bunting, 2020, 549). Although this principle should be interpreted as significantly different in intention - due to the context the statements are made in - to the refrain of "All lives matter" as made in response to the Black Lives Matter movement, the similarities nevertheless highlight one of the potential tensions when proposing a universalising narrative. The discussions over the alternative "All Lives Matter" (as well as the previously mentioned counter of "Blue Lives Matter") slogan are part of a wider controversy in which BLM have been called "racist and anti-law enforcement" (Banks, 2018, 709).

While the "All lives matter" refrain can be interpreted in different ways, there is an emerging consensus that it is, firstly, made in response to an interpretation of "Black lives matter" as meaning "Only black lives matter", and, secondly, that it is "rooted in an ethos or ideology of color-blindness"

or “post-racialism”, an ideology which “directs us to aim to make race an insignificant category in public life; it tells us that race should not matter” (Atkins, 2019, 1-2; Sundstrom, 2018, 491). All Lives Matter is a statement which does conform to the ideal of colour-blindness, while Black Lives Matter does not (Atkins, 2019, 2). In their discussion of the question of universality and Black Lives Matter, Judith Butler argues that when people respond to Black Lives Matter with All Lives Matter:

they misunderstand the problem, but not because their message is untrue. It is true that all lives matter, but it is equally true that not all lives are understood to matter which is precisely why it is most important to name the lives that have not mattered, and are struggling to matter in the way they deserve (Yancy and Butler, 2015).

In other words, to Butler, the aspiration of the universal ideology that all lives matter is important; however, the way to achieve such universality is precisely through specificity in calling for resistance to “foreground those lives that are not mattering now” (Yancy and Butler, 2015). While this foregrounding is sometimes criticised as failing to create a colour-blind public sphere and discussion, it is relevant to maintain the specificity that Butler discusses, because racial discrimination and inequality do still exist and impact the public sphere (Atkins, 2019, 2; Sundstrom, 2018, 492). Further, what a response of All Lives Matter - sometimes declared to be made in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement - does, is make Black Lives Matter “a trivial consequence of an obvious truth” - “Of course, black lives matter; all lives matter” (Atkins, 2019, 2) rather than a stated aim which is significantly different to present reality and will take struggle and conflict to achieve because of structural and systemic racist violence; that is, an important and confrontational statement. As Butler states:

When we are talking about racism, and anti-black racism in the United States, we have to remember that under slavery black lives were considered only a fraction of a human life, so the prevailing way of valuing lives assumed that some lives mattered more ... One reason the chant ‘Black Lives Matter’ is so important is that it states the obvious but the obvious has not yet been historically realized (Yancy and Butler, 2015).

In contrast to Butler’s and others’ re-interpretation of the Black Lives Matter refrain as being in reality universal in its message, Atkins (2019, 3) actually challenges the idea that a movement goal

must be universal in some way in order to be valid or acceptable. They (*ibid*, 4) argue that an insistence that the meaning of Black Lives Matter is in fact universal entails the acceptance of a “false dilemma” for the movement against racist violence. The dilemma is based on the premise that a statement about the value of Black lives must necessarily be taking a stance on the value of non-Black (mainly white) lives as well; this means that the choice is between a meaning of “Black lives matter, too” in which case the statement becomes trivial, or “Only black lives matter”, in which case the statement is exclusionary or perhaps even dismissive of non-Black lives (*ibid*). However, writes Atkins (*ibid*) “‘Black lives matter’ need not be understood as doing either”. In other words, the dilemma which Atkins (*ibid*, 9) aims to reject is that “Black lives matter” is seen as either exclusionary, or required to be inclusive, as in, affirm specifically that white lives matter. The universalising interpretation of “Black lives matter” to mean “Black lives matter, too” is then “a way of repositioning, not clarifying” the statement (*ibid*). Instead, Atkins (*ibid*, 8-9) takes “Black lives matter” to be a statement which exposes the current system of values in which white lives already matter and dominate, and therefore do not need affirming.

As a parallel, Atkins (2019, 5) discusses the rise of the concept of Black Power in the 1960s, a movement which was repeatedly requested by “the white intelligentsia” of the time to define what Black Power meant. However, any confusion or controversy over the meaning of Black Power was because of an atmosphere of white fear, and Atkins states that:

its meaning was clear enough to the poor, uneducated, and disenfranchised blacks to whom it was, in the first instance, addressed. I would venture that its meaning was clear to them, though not to white Americans, because it spoke to their exclusion from the field of power and articulated this exclusion in a way that wasn’t calibrated to white racial sensibilities (Atkins, 2019, 5).

For example, during voting rights campaigns in the Southern states, and campaigns to register voters, the attempt to break dependence on white people (for housing, jobs, etc.) was in fact a step not towards separation, but participation, through participating in the democratic processes on a more equal footing (Atkins, 2019, 7). Building on this, the suggestion is that rather than the contention over the meaning of Black Lives Matter being because of a miscommunication, a failure from the BLM movement to communicate their meaning properly, it may be because Black

Lives Matter expresses a “black solidarity movement” as a “group understanding”, not in relation to white Americans, and further, with an aim “of provoking white Americans into developing a more adequate, more racially aware, group understanding” (*ibid*, 11, 17). Illustrating this parallel between the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black Power movement, BLM describe themselves, not as a movement mainly aimed at achieving state protection from racist violence, but one whose “members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes” (Black Lives Matter, 2020a).

These statements of Black Power and Black Lives Matter as a continuation of this, are a sharp contrast to Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous and popular brand of civil rights struggle. Where King famously appealed to white conscience and called for freedom and rights, the Black Power movement abandoned appealing to conscience (and “implicitly recognize[d] the failure of these appeals”), demanded “a place in political life whether that seemed good (or timely) to whites”, and left the idea of a “shared pursuit of the freedom promised to all” (Atkins, 2019, 7; Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites eds, 2005, 87-103; Dyson, 2001, 104; Hooker, 2016, 457).

To further illustrate the difference between a more nuanced and inequality-conscious universal framing (such as Butler’s discussion of Black Lives Matter) as opposed to a rhetoric of resistance, the example of police participating in Pride parades is useful to examine further. As discussed in this chapter, the Auckland Pride board essentially wanted to plan a Pride march in which everyone could be included, even though they acknowledged that this would require compromising and limiting some participants’ actions. However, the arguments and rhetoric of No Pride in Prisons/PAPA is more usefully understood here as not an attempt at universal inclusion, but rather exactly as a rhetoric of resistance against the institution of the New Zealand Police, policing more broadly, and police violence disproportionately aimed at communities of colour. PAPA spokesperson Emilie Rāketē (2019) declared directly that the ban on police uniforms had also been a compromise on their side, since many from the community disproportionately targeted by police “don’t want them to show up at all”. Similarly, the group stated in 2016 with regards to the participation of the New Zealand Department of Corrections “The fact of the matter is that prisons ... are violent, racist institutions that have no place in any pride parade” (Radio New Zealand, 2016a).

As Atkins (2019, 14) explains, the goal for a resistance movement is not necessarily universality in the form of being included in “the great conversation” of all parties, “enabling speakers who had been marginalized to articulate and contribute their understandings for collective epistemic benefit”, although this is often the assumed goal. In the case of Auckland Pride, the New Zealand Police’s rhetoric certainly framed the question in this way, by calling on PAPA, the Auckland Pride board, and activists supporting a uniform ban to “discuss the group’s issues with them” and what the police could improve on, but that “no one’s come back to us” (Corcoran, 2018; Radio New Zealand, 2015). This lack of response to an invitation to discuss the issues is, however, perhaps unsurprising given not only that PAPA had already made very public statements about what they were criticising, that the police had themselves held back activists protesting police participation in Pride, but also that Auckland Pride had held open community meetings and published the issues and questions discussed during these, notably discussions of racism, structural violence against marginalised groups, and the role of state institutions such as police and corrections in Pride marches (Murphy, 2018). The ban on uniforms was clearly, then, not sprung on the NZ police with no prior discussion or direct critiques.

Further, the lack of interest in talking to the New Zealand Police at the time was perhaps less a sign of “prejudices” and being “ill-informed” as police stated (Radio New Zealand, 2015), and more a recognition of the fact that the issues were unlikely to be resolved in the short term. Although PAPA did not state that they would always resist police participation, they did make it clear that their reasons for resisting were not short-term issues, but rather that “New Zealand’s Police Force has a lot - a lot - of work to do before they should be celebrated in a parade of this kind” (Boynton, 2018; Rāketē, 2019). The stance of PAPA is therefore rather a realisation that an open and equal debate is not going to occur, and a choice to instead take advantage of the opportunities for creating and strengthening solidarity and power within the resistance community (Atkins, 2019, 14-15).

As PAPA spokesperson Emilie Rāketē (2019) argues, the strong reaction of the New Zealand Police to the uniform ban, by refusing to participate altogether, likely has less to do with a shock that an open and equal discussion of the issues did not take place, and more to do with the fact that they were, indeed, met with a rhetoric of resistance against their institution. This is both because, as shown above, open and public arguments were presented to the New Zealand Police, and also because police had on other occasions opted to wear either civilian clothes or “casual” police clothes

while representing the organisation at community events (*ibid*). Rākete argues that statements from the police demonstrate why the demand to not wear uniforms on this particular occasion was met with a refusal to participate:

Speaking to gay media outlet Express, [Police] Inspector Tracy Phillips says that ‘if our people are not allowed to proudly march as police officers, we won’t come.’ And that, really, is it. The police couldn’t march proudly, in their uniforms, because the Auckland Pride community has made it clear what that uniform represents to us. It represents a cowering 12 year-old being mauled by a trained attack dog. It represents teenagers burning to death inside wrecked cars following preventable Police pursuits. It represents the constant racist overpolicing of Māori communities. In short, the police pulled out of the Parade because Auckland Pride had the audacity to point out they have very little to be proud of (Rākete, 2019).

Also worth noting in this argument is the intersectional resistance which uses Pride as a platform to protest and resist not only police violence against rainbow community members, but against communities of colour more broadly, underlining the fact that for some members of the rainbow community, these forms of violence cannot be separated because they are intersecting parts of their identity. This form of resistance is potentially highly problematic for a police force which, despite increasing levels of violence against Māori and other New Zealand communities of colour, has chosen a public relations strategy “hinged on the language of diversity and inclusion” (Rākete, 2019), the very same principles that are fairly widely agreed on to be fundamental to the Pride movement. The argument that increased inclusion and diversity in violent and oppressive institutions such as the police force will solve the violence is, however, not yet realised, since as Hooker (2016, 463) writes of the US, “the presence of black police officers does not appear to prevent violence toward black citizens. That is because white supremacy produces a racial state that exceeds mere demography or phenotype”. Rākete (2019) writes that in order to promote this narrative of inclusion and diversity, whenever police had been allowed “to represent themselves as innocuous part of [rainbow] communities” and use these as an opportunity to promote the New Zealand Police Force as a diverse and inclusive organisation, wearing something other than formal uniform was acceptable to the police. They write therefore that:

The police-led boycott of Auckland Pride has in my view never been about their uniforms. It has been about dominating a public conversation about racist police violence. It has been about punishing, in the most public and contemptuous manner possible, the Auckland Pride community for daring to raise the issue of racist police violence. This only makes it more important, more necessary, that we remain absolutely unrelenting in the pursuit of our mutual liberation – something which flows not from the heel of a police officer's boot, but from the collective power of masses (Rāketē, 2019).

This form of resistance, by refusing to include police in Pride because of disproportionate police violence against not only rainbow community members of colour, but all people of colour, is clearly a form of nonviolent resistance, even accepting more expansive definitions of violence, because they are not reinforcing hierarchies of domination or systemic violence. It does, however, challenge the well-known tenets of pacifism's call to respect all life for ethical reasons, and strategic nonviolence's attempted use of respectability politics for tactical reasons, because it not only refuses this, but exposes the harm that can be done by following these principles.

In a similar manner, the critiques of Extinction Rebellion's approach to and rhetoric around police, prisons, and law enforcement are arguably better understood by reading them as a rhetoric of resistance than an attempt to be included. That is, by pointing out the inherent issues with XR's approach - including providing positive PR for the kind and hospitable UK police force (Farrell et al., 2019, 97-98), masking or ignoring systemic and structural violence against communities of colour, and reinforcing a hierarchy of superior forms of activism which rest on the privilege to be able to be arrested - the critics may be more interested in resisting not only Extinction Rebellion's colour-blindness, but the general white-washing of climate justice. Further, the aim may be less to reform Extinction Rebellion into a perfectly equal and inclusive climate justice space, as the new centre for the climate justice cause, but to raise the profile of other groups and movements, with a more intersectional approach, without necessarily - in a parallel to Atkins' arguments about the Black Lives Matter refrain - meaning this to be an evaluation of the worthiness or promise of Extinction Rebellion or other climate movements like it. Further, it is possible that Atkins' (2019, 17) argument that the hope for both the Black Lives Matter and the Black Power movements "for a transformation

so radical that it couldn't be described in terms of inclusion" applies to the examples of Extinction Rebellion and Pride as well.

Conclusion

While questions of collective identity formation and expression in nonviolent movements may seem very distant from impacts of violence on civil resistance, this chapter has aimed to demonstrate a number of ways in which these processes and expressions are, in fact, impacted by different forms and definitions of violence. This is both because collective identities can, in certain manifestations, mask and marginalise important occurrences of violence, but also because these identities risk working as symbolic violence by maintaining and masking hierarchies and relations of domination. The chapter focused on collective identities of inclusion, diversity, universality, and apolitical – understood as above or beyond politics – framings, as areas of contestation and resistance, despite narratives of these as all-encompassing through a vague and abstract use of the concepts.

The chapter revisited the critiques of Extinction Rebellion's approach to policing in the early days of the movement. This was shown to be relevant not only in terms of the impact that police violence has on activists – as discussed in Chapter Five on the backfire effect – but also in terms of the attempts at respectability expressed in the collective identity of XR, and in this case, within the wider climate justice movement which Extinction Rebellion is part of. The case of Pride marches and conflicts over police marching in these in uniforms was used as another illustration of the problems with claiming to be respecting or including everyone, which in reality often turns out to exclude the same people that are exposed to systemic and structural forms of violence, such as communities of colour facing disproportionate police violence. These themes cannot be understood without treating forms of violence and repression as intersectional, which leads to the argument that not everyone has the luxury of separating forms of violence – that is, protesting climate change or celebrating the advancement of LGBTQIA+ rights while ignoring police violence against communities of colour. Therefore, a policy of inclusion and respect of "everyone" is not possible, and inclusion of some will lead to exclusion of others.

Moving on from the ideals of inclusion and diversity, the chapter discussed the cases of Occupy, Extinction Rebellion, and Pride with regards to the framing of movement goals in universal

terms, and the role of violence within this. This discussion brings up another recent nonviolent movement, which has been discussed in previous chapters already, Black Lives Matter. The debates surrounding the Black Lives Matter or All Lives Matter polemic demonstrates a number of the issues with attempting to turn a specific and limited aim, such as justice for Black communities in the US, into a universal one. Using Atkins' (2019) critique of this universalist narrative, the chapter argues that the critiques of police participation in Pride and the white-washing of climate activism by Extinction Rebellion are better understood as rhetorics of resistance than as attempts to improve or increase the universal aim of Pride or Extinction Rebellion. This conception of a different kind of nonviolent resistance challenges popular conceptions of nonviolence as being necessarily about aiming for the good of everyone, even the opponent or passive bystanders in a struggle.

Although the chapter addresses both strategic and principled nonviolence, the chapter does in many ways go beyond strategic nonviolence and is perhaps more relevant to principled nonviolence arguments. That is, the discussion here goes beyond whether a nonviolent movement achieved their stated goals, which would make it successful in a strategic analysis. Instead, as Samuel (2013, 398) also argues, a collective identity formation analysis, which is used throughout the chapter, allows a discussion beyond evaluating the achievement of stated goals, but also "whether injustices in the production of collective identities translate into normative problems of movement goals themselves". Or, in the case of specifically declared nonviolent movements, whether occurrences of forms of violence within the movement, for example in the collective identity formation process, constitute a blurring or complication of the identity of being a nonviolent movement. In the case of Extinction Rebellion's attitude towards police and the legal system, the discussion would then not simply be whether this exclusion and alienation of activists of colour presents a practical hindrance to achieving the key goals of the movement (although that is certainly still part of the discussion, as also demonstrated in Chapter Five), but also whether it becomes an issue for a movement so strongly self-identified as nonviolent to perpetuate and potentially reinforce structural violence against people of colour and other groups marginalised or victimised by the British legal system.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In some senses, what all of this leaves us with is more questions and open endings than answers. While this openness is a part of the overall argument of this thesis, some answers and arguments were, of course, still offered in this project. This conclusion will summarise the main arguments and lessons from the individual chapters of the thesis, discuss the wider arguments and implications of the thesis as a whole, and point to some potential avenues for further investigations.

In Chapter One, I present a starting point for this research project through asking, firstly, if it is problematic if all violence becomes equalised as simply “bad” to the point that protesters throwing rocks through windows come to be seen as just as bad as the global system of exploitation and harm that they are protesting; and secondly, if it is not still true, in some sense, that all violence is bad, and whether this means that nonviolence theory has so far been too narrow in its conceptualisation of violence. The chapter introduces the two frameworks of hurrah-words (a more commonly used expression in my native language of Danish) and purity politics as ways to describe how nonviolent resistance is popularly viewed. What both these concepts cover is an attempt to interrogate more closely the messy, unclear, and problematic parts of a concept which is commonly seen as a universally positive phenomenon. However, this often covers quite substantial disagreements about what is actually behind the concept, or masks how some issues, people, or groups, are excluded from this without notice. From these concerns come the two main research questions for this project:

- 1: What are the present assumptions around the definition of violence and the definitional line(s) between violence and nonviolence in the field, and what are the implications of this?
- 2: What are some ways in which violence occurs in nonviolent civil resistance and how does nonviolence theory start to make sense of this?

The methodology for answering these draws on hermeneutical principles, adopting a narrative approach to case studies, and a thorough investigation of concepts, theories, and arguments, all with a focus on the importance of meaning. The two research questions are each discussed and answered in different chapters, with some discussions being more focused on a

concrete impact of a form of violence, and others more on contestations and tensions over what counts as violence, and what forms of violence count in nonviolent theory and practice.

The second chapter provides an overview of the field of nonviolence literature, focusing especially on how violence, nonviolence, and the definitional line(s) between them are imagined, conceptualised, and defined – or how they are sometimes not or barely considered at all. An important part of this is to understand the observation-based and naturalist methodologies that are the foundation of the field of nonviolence literature and which lead to a strong focus on empirical data, and relatively little theoretical or conceptual analysis. This has also led to an attempt within the field to articulate regularities and dynamics of nonviolent resistance campaigns that cross temporal and cultural boundaries. In contrast, this thesis emphasises the importance of context a number of times throughout. The literature review discusses the two major strands of nonviolence, which are principled nonviolence or pacifism, and strategic nonviolence. The chapter outlines the main differences between the two strands, but also the intersections and overlaps, and arguments that the two strands cannot, in fact, be fully separated. For the purposes of this thesis, the distinction between the two strands is not of major significance, since the questions and issues I examine speak to both versions of nonviolence. While the literature review purposefully does not attempt to arrive at a single, unified definition of nonviolence, it provides an overview of different definitional strategies and approaches within the field and uses this to demonstrate the complex and multi-dimensional character of not only the concept of nonviolence, but its relationship to violence. Finally, the chapter looks more closely at some of the central dynamics and arguments of how nonviolent resistance works, and why it is argued in the literature to be more effective than violent insurgencies. These arguments are all centred around the ability to mobilise a greater number and wider range of participants. This, in turn, allows both for a greater diversity of tactics and for the central effect of repression backfire to work.

Following from this overview of the literature on nonviolence, Chapter Three provides a brief overview of a certain popular narrative of the history of nonviolent resistance. The chapter looks at the nonviolent resistance movements of the anti-colonial struggle in India, the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, and the 1950s and 1960s civil rights struggle in the United States . Given the importance of these three movements in the history and development of civil resistance, they are important to introduce in order to further illustrate the role that violence and definitions of

violence play in nonviolent civil resistance. The chapter focuses on a particular popular narrative, influenced by purist conceptions of the relationship between violence and nonviolence in the movements; the heavy focus on the three leader figures of Gandhi, Mandela, and King; and ideas of the universalist aims and applications of these movements and their approach. Importantly, the chapter emphasises the argument that while these movements are in very meaningful ways nonviolent, this does not mean that violence was fully absent in the movements, their path to success, internal structures, or rhetoric. The history of these three movements also demonstrates the variability and changeability of what it means to practice nonviolent resistance, given the significant differences between the three leaders' and movements' interpretation of nonviolence.

In order to discuss the role of violence in nonviolent resistance more thoroughly and nuanced, Chapter Four draws on a number of academic fields to provide an overview of different possible definitions, conceptions, and theories of violence. Building on this wide range of literature on the concept of violence, the chapter demonstrates and argues that violence – much like nonviolence – is a complex, varied, and often deeply contested phenomenon. Despite this contestation, and the subjective and interpretive aspects of the concept of violence, the chapter also argues that this is not the same as an argument that violence can mean anything and everything; a certain rigour of arguments and analysis is needed, as is an understanding of the basic arguments and logic of other interpretations of violence than our own. While the argument of this thesis is therefore that the work of thinking about violence and its impact in nonviolence theory is never finished, the chapter on the concept of violence is intended as a tool – or tool-box, if you will – for these discussions, by outlining a number of the dividing lines, categories, and definitions that are important for the rest of the thesis, and/or for the field of nonviolence more generally.

Finally, chapters five to seven each look at a more specific situation or dynamic in which violence and definitions of violence impact nonviolent resistance. Chapter Five looks at the situation of repressive violence by the opponent against a nonviolent movement or campaign. While this occurrence of violence is by no means unacknowledged in nonviolence literature, which uses this as the starting point for one of the major mechanisms of nonviolent resistance, the backfire effect, the chapter demonstrates that a number of implications and aspects of this are not discussed. The underlying argument of the chapter, and under-investigated aspect of backfire theory, is the inherent importance that normative principles and ethical perspectives continue to play in the

backfire dynamic. These include assumptions about the universality or reliability of bystander sympathy, the narrative that public, performative suffering demonstrates dedication and commitment more so than other forms of activist work, and the acceptance of suffering as a justified requirement in order to earn social justice and progress towards equality. This chapter demonstrates scepticism towards purist conceptions of nonviolence, not only through the argument that surely, this integral importance of an occurrence of violence breaks any sphere of nonviolence to some extent, but also by nuancing and complicating key, and often romanticised parts of backfire theories, as described above.

The sixth chapter starts with examining the meaning and impact of sexual and gendered violence in Occupy camps, focusing especially on the tension over which forms of violence matter to nonviolent movements. The chapter argues that occurrences of violence such as these should be treated as integral to our understanding and treatment of nonviolent resistance movements, since they not only limit and reduce some of the advantages of nonviolent resistance, such as wider participation, but also because different forms of violence intersect. Therefore, for a movement to maintain a strict focus on only one form of violence as “the main issue” limits the extent to which this form of violence is actually being reduced for all people. The chapter makes use of a number of different definitions of violence, and discussions of hierarchies of violence, such as private violence being relegated to a less important status than public or political violence. The chapter then examines the impact of an assumption of equality between members when setting up internal structures of a movement. While the decision to have an unstructured or leaderless organisation is mostly based on an aspiration to avoid hierarchies and marginalisation, this can in some cases have the opposite effect. Hierarchies, abilities, resources, and repressions from outside society impact the internal dynamics of nonviolent movements and a lack of procedures or guidelines to account for this may end up reinforcing these systems and structures instead.

Finally, Chapter Seven examines, as the title suggests, how collective identity formation processes in nonviolent movements can lead to or produce violence – mainly as symbolic violence – but also how these processes are impacted by different forms of violence. This chapter revisits earlier case studies by looking at both Extinction Rebellion, Occupy, and the Black Lives Matter movement. It also introduces the story of protests and tensions at Auckland Pride over the involvement of uniformed police, since this case is an excellent example of the limitations of

concepts such as tolerance, inclusion, and diversity. The chapter argues that universal inclusion is rarely actually possible, and that in cases where this is seen as happening, it is rather that the people, groups, or ideas that are left out are the ones usually marginalised and excluded, which often goes unnoticed. Protests to gain inclusion, such as the protests at Auckland Pride and the push against police participation may therefore be perceived as limiting inclusiveness, rather than the re-negotiation of who gets to be included that they actually are. The chapter also discusses potential impacts of universalistic and apolitical rhetoric and messaging as part of the collective identity of a movement, and argues that sometimes – such as with the discussion of the Black Lives Matter/All Lives Matter contention – a perceived universality is, once again, in fact a specific world view and promotion of specific interests. The chapter argues, overall, that sometimes the least violently exclusive or repressive approach is, in fact, to admit that a movement or campaign is not for and by everyone, but specifically for marginalised or oppressed people and groups. While this may sound less attractive to nonviolence proponents, it will have the effect of working more successfully against systemic and structural forms of violence.

The three chapters examining different concrete impacts of violence and definitions of violence are, clearly, far from an all-encompassing or final list of these impacts. They are, however, attempts at demonstrating what nonviolence theory might look like if violence is acknowledged and taken seriously as an important part of how and why nonviolence works. An obvious and promising avenue for further investigation of the questions and points raised in this thesis would be an empirical project looking at how the role of violence and definitions of violence is, or is not, discussed or acknowledged in the practical work of nonviolent resistance. A future research project might even develop suggested frameworks for facilitating such discussions and debates within movements and assess the feasibility of performing this kind of slow and ongoing work in the middle of what is most often hectic and demanding activism, organised by run-down and busy activists.

It might seem – and could be argued – that this project simply asks too much of nonviolence theory and practice by looking at such a wide range of forms of violence, and interactions between violence and nonviolence as relevant to the core of the concept of nonviolence. That is, if we start to look at all forms of violence as potentially relevant to defining nonviolence, will that not just lead to paralysing movements and making any kind of action impossible? However, the argument here is not to mandate that all forms of violence be thought about and acted on equally at all times. But,

the fact that that would clearly be impossible is no argument for automatically excluding some forms of violence from the conversation, perhaps especially not if these are the forms of violence often overlooked and excluded from conversations in general. As Joanna Russ wrote in 1981:

All the issues are related. Now nobody can deal with all the issues - there isn't energy and time. But we can deal with 'our' issues (the ones that affect us immediately) in a way that relates them to all the others. I think we had better, because otherwise we're bound to fail. And ... that's fine if what you really want is to be right. But not if you want to change things (McAllister et al., 1982, 9).

While the delineation that movements might only deal with issues, or forms of violence, that directly impact them is not necessarily a universally applicable rule, the point here is that being open to "all the issues" does not mean that we have to stay paralysed by not being able to work on all of them at the same time. The point is to keep discussing, deliberating, and perhaps most importantly, listening. And while these may be ambitious aims, that is nothing new within the area of nonviolence, which is after all characterised by strong ideals, high aspirations, and a wish within both scholarship and activism to change the world for the better.

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